

J E S U S

“CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOUR.”

PRIZE CATECHISM

ON THE

Principles and Position

OF THE

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

BY THE REV. THOMAS MARTIN.

“What we admire we praise ; and, when we praise,
Advance it into notice, that its worth,
Acknowledged, others may admire it too.”—*Cowper.*

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PREFATORY NOTE.

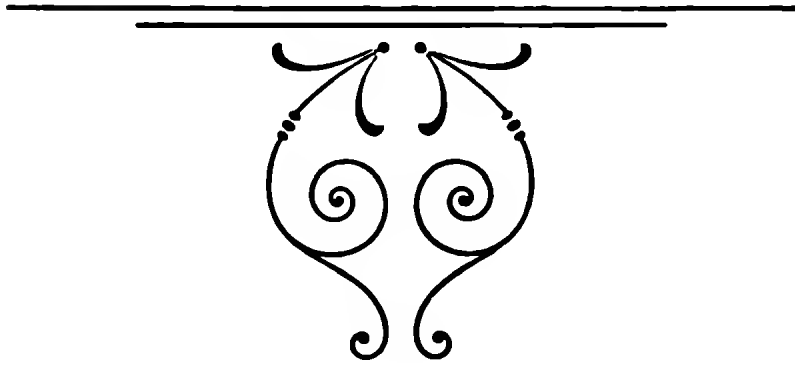
THE council of the Covenanters' Union has felt strongly the need of a text-book on the history and principles of the Church, that would be suitable to the capacity of the young. The Rev. Thomas Martin's "Prize Catechism on the Principles and Position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church" is considered to be admirably adapted to supply this need. Hence it is now reprinted, in the hope that it may prove of eminent service in the instruction of the youth of the Church in the great principles for which our Church has contended for more than two centuries.

The author of this Catechism belonged to the Reformed Presbyterian Synod of Scotland, and, in writing, had Scotch readers in view, *e.g.*, Q. 3. In treating of the differences between the R.P. Church and other Churches, he has confined himself to the ecclesiastical situation in Scotland. Because of these facts it might be supposed that this Catechism would not be so well adapted for use in Ireland. But Scotland is the most Presbyterian country in the world, and there is no land in which the important issues at stake between the R.P. Church and other Presbyterian Churches are presented so clearly and in so many different forms as in Scotland. When one has learned the reasons why the R.P. Church of Scotland is bound to maintain a position of separation from the other Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, all that is necessary to understand why the R.P. Church ought to remain separate from Presbyterian Churches, as

they now exist, throughout the world, is a knowledge of their standards and practices. It has therefore been deemed best to reprint this Catechism without any alteration to adapt it to the special circumstances of the R.P. Church of Ireland.

A few slight errors have been corrected.

JANUARY, 1898.



PREFATORY NOTE BY THE AUTHOR.

IN the month of June, 1853, three prizes of £25, £5, and £3 each, were offered for the three best Catechisms on the Principles and Position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Scotland. The competition was open to the entire membership of the Church. In the month of June, 1854, the Adjudicators—the Rev. Stewart Bates, D.D., the Rev. John Graham, and the Rev. James Ferguson (who had been assumed in place of the Rev. Andrew Symington, D.D., deceased)—gave their award, and adjudged the first prize to the writer of the following pages. This Catechism is now, at the request of the parties with whom the scheme originated, given to the public. The author is deeply sensible of its imperfections; but if it shall prove instrumental, by the blessing of God, in promoting a correct acquaintance with the important principles for which the Reformed Presbyterian Church has been called to witness, and in deepening on the minds of those who do know them a feeling of obligation to maintain and exemplify them, he will esteem himself to be highly privileged and honoured.

STRATHMIGLO, NOV., 1854.

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CATECHISM.

I.—INTRODUCTION.

1. What is a church ?

A church is a company of persons united in professing the doctrines, observing the institutions, and obeying the precepts of Christ.—(Doct. Test. xi. 4.)

2. Does the church to which you belong possess this character ?

I am convinced that she does.

3. What is her proper designation ?

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

4. Why is she so named ?

For two reasons,—

(1) As expressive of her adherence to the distinguished attainments reached by the Church of Scotland during the Second Reformation, in the years 1638—1649.

(2) As a public protest against the abandonment and proscription of these attainments by the NATION, and against the unfaithful manner in which they have been treated by the CHURCHES.

II.—SUPREME STANDARDS.

5. To what does the Reformed Presbyterian Church appeal as her supreme standard?

To the word of God, which she affirms to be "the alone infallible rule of faith and practice."—(See terms of fellowship.)

6. What do you understand by matters of faith ?

What men are required to believe.

7. What do you intend by matters of practice ?

Things to be performed.

8. Why is the word of God affirmed to be an infallible rule ?

Because it is perfectly free from error.

9. Where is the word of God contained ?

In the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

10. What is your meaning when you say that the Scriptures are the word of God ?

That holy men of God were infallibly guided in the matter and language of them, writing as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.—(Doct. Test. i. 3.)

11. On what grounds are you convinced that the Scriptures are the word of God ?

The miracles performed by those who wrote them ; the predictions which they contain, and which have in many cases been strikingly fulfilled ; their astonishing preservation ; their sublime and God-honouring doctrines ; their holy precepts ; the entire harmony of all their parts ; and the amazing effects which they have produced upon individuals and communities, combine to testify their divine origin.

12. Why do you say that the Scriptures are the *alone* infallible rule of faith and practice?

Because they, *and they only*, are "in themselves, without interpretation, addition, or sanction from man, a clear, perfect, and authoritative rule of faith and duty."—(Doct. Test. i. 3.)

13. Upon whom does the obligation to believe and obey the Scriptures rest?

Upon all to whom they come, both in their individual and social capacity.

14. To what does this obligation extend?

To all matters civil and religious.

15. Is every individual entitled to read the Scriptures?

Most assuredly. The Saviour urges the Jewish multitudes to search the Scriptures, John v. 39; the Bereans are praised because they searched the Scriptures daily, Acts xvii. 11; and the Jews are represented as erring because they knew not the Scriptures, Matt. xxii. 29.

16. Is not every man entitled, yea bound, to ascertain for himself the meaning of God's word, and to embrace whatever it teaches?

Undoubtedly. Paul calls upon the Corinthians to judge what he said, 1 Cor. x. 15; and the Saviour refers for information on a point of much importance to the Scriptures, saying, "What is written in the Scriptures? How readest thou?"

17. Why are men bound to receive with

implicit confidence and submission what is taught in the Scriptures ?

Because God, who speaks in them, is Supreme Lord, and all his words are infallibly faithful and wise.

18. Does implicit confidence in the teachings of God's word interfere with, or supersede the proper exercise of reason.

By no means. It would be presumptuous in man to assume the office of determining whether what God says is true and right ; but his reason has ample room for exercise in examining the proofs that the Scriptures are a divine revelation, in ascertaining the meaning of what is there taught, and in determining by their aid the character of every opinion and act, in reference to which he is called to form a judgment.

19. Is it any valid objection to the Scriptures that they contain many things which men are unable to comprehend ?

No. This is to be expected in a revelation from God, and arises from the limited nature of man's faculties, and the incomprehensible character of the things spoken of.

20. What is their duty, in regard to the church, who possess the Scriptures ?

It is their duty to try the claims of the various religious communities by them, and to connect themselves with that community which most fully agrees with their instructions.

21. Are there not parties who hold sentiments and follow practices in regard to the

Scriptures, different from what you have now affirmed to be dutiful ?

Yes.

22. Who are these ?

Infidels or Deists, Socinians, Papists, Episcopalians, Puseyites or Tractarians, and the Quakers or Friends.

23. What are the sentiments of Deists in regard to the Scriptures ?

That the light of nature is sufficient to guide men, that a revelation from God is unnecessary and impossible, and that consequently, the Bible is not a revelation from him.

24. What are the views and practices of Papists in regard to the Scriptures ?

They maintain that it cannot be certainly known that the Scriptures are the word of God, except from the testimony of the Church; that the Scriptures derive their authority from the Church ; that the apocryphal books and the traditions of the fathers are of equal authority with the Scriptures ; that the free use of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue ought not to be permitted to the people ; and that all deserve anathema who do not receive the interpretation put upon the Scriptures by the Popish Church, or who presume to receive them in a sense that is different.—(Dec. of Council of Trent ; Bayle's Cat. ; Stapleton ; Index Expurg.)

25. What are the sentiments of Socinians in regard to the Scriptures ?

They reject large portions of them as spurious: they deny their plenary inspiration, as "a notion destitute of all proof;" they teach, that no man is bound implicitly to believe everything advanced by the writers of the Old and New Testaments; and they affirm that men are at liberty to examine the reasonings of the writers, and the facts they state, "in order that they may distinguish what may be depended on, and what may not."—(See Belsham's Enquiry, Priestley's Letters, and Hist. of Early Opinions.)

26. What are the objectionable practices of the Episcopalians in regard to the Scriptures?

They have the Apocrypha bound up with them, and read in churches as a part of public worship.

27. Wherein do the Puseyites or Tractarians err?

They virtually exalt the authority of the early fathers above God's word, by employing them to determine in what sense it must be understood and received by us.

28. What are the views held by the Quakers or Friends?

They admit that the Scriptures were a revelation from God to those to whom they were at first addressed, but maintain that, in the same sense, revelations continue to be made by the Spirit to God's people.

29. Is there any party who holds that the Old Testament is inferior in authority and obligation to the New?

No ; but multitudes express themselves in such a manner as would lead to this conclusion, and proceed practically as if this were a received principle.

30. Is it not true that many portions of the Old Testament have ceased to be of obligation ?

What related to judicial and ceremonial observances is not now in force. With this exception the Old Testament is of universal and perpetual obligation.

31. Do not even those portions which relate to ceremonial and judicial observances reflect much light upon the teachings of the New Testament ?

They do. Every part of the Old Testament is pronounced to be "profitable for instruction," and to be "written for our learning." There are many passages in the New Testament which can only be understood by a reference to the Old.

III.—CONFESSION OF FAITH.

32. Do not many parties who widely differ from one another on points of great importance, agree in appealing to the word of God for confirmation of their opinions ?

Almost all parties do so.

33. Is it not obligatory upon Churches to make publicly known their sentiments in regard to the matters that are in dispute ?

It certainly is.

34. Wherein consists the need for this ?

It prevents the friends of truth from being confounded with those who advocate error; it unveils error, in order that it may be shunned; it makes manifest the truth, awakens the attention of men to its claims, and aids them in determining what is right.

35. By what name is such an authoritative statement, made by a Church, of the doctrines she maintains, the position she assumes, and the points wherein she differs from other Churches, generally known?

It is variously denominated a creed, a confession, or a testimony.

36. Are there not religious communities which denounce such confessions as uncalled-for and mischievous?

Yes; they affirm the word of God to be their testimony, and reject all human formulas as expressive of their sentiments.

37. Is it possible for any religious community to exist without a creed or confession, distinct from the word of God?

It is not. There must be some valid reason for their separate existence, otherwise they are guilty of schism. The cause of their standing aloof from other Churches, avowed to the world in whatever form, and constituting the basis of their distinct fellowship, is their testimony.

38. Is it not better that a Church should have a declaration of her principles, formally and judicially sanctioned, than that each

individual connected with her should be left to make a statement of these for himself ?

It is manifestly better. Such a declaration is more likely to secure public respect and confidence, to maintain unity, to excite enquiry, and to perpetuate the cause on whose behalf it is issued.

39. Do you find any reference to such a testimony, as distinct from the Scriptures, in the word of God ?

Yes ; those whose souls are under the altar were slain for the word of God, and for the *testimony* which they held, Rev. vi. 9 ; the two witnesses are spoken of as having *finished* their testimony, which cannot mean the word of God, Rev. xi. 7.

40. What should be the distinguishing characteristics of such a testimony ?

It should be distinguished by plainness, fulness, fidelity, and kindness.

41. What is the confession to which the Reformed Presbyterian Church has avowed her adherence ?

The Westminster Confession of Faith.

42. Why is it so named ?

Because it was compiled by an Assembly of Divines, held in the city of Westminster.

43. When did this Assembly meet ?

On Saturday, 1st July, 1643.

44. How long were its sittings continued ?

For five years, seven months, and twenty-two days. The number of its Sessions was 1,163.

45. By whom was this Assembly called ?

By the English Parliament, in compliance with a petition from the ministers of London.

46. For what purpose was it called ?

To be consulted by the Parliament in regard to the government and liturgy of the English Church, and for vindicating and clearing the doctrines of the said Church from false aspersions and interpretations.—Neal, vol. ii. p. 206.

47. What was the object sought to be attained by these means ?

“ The settling in the Church such a government as may be most agreeable to God’s holy word, and most apt to procure and preserve the peace of the Church at home, and nearer agreement with the Church of Scotland and other Reformed Churches abroad.”

48. Did the Westminster Assembly sustain the character of a church court ?

It did not. Its powers were limited to *consultation* only.

49. Did the Scottish Church take any part in that Assembly ?

Yes : eight Commissioners—five ministers and three elders—were appointed to attend its meetings. Six of these took an active part in its proceedings.

50. What documents were produced by that Assembly, with a view to promote union and uniformity among the Reformed Churches ?

The Confession of Faith, the Catechisms Larger and Shorter, the Form of Church Gov-

ernment, and the Directory for the Public Worship of God.

51. What is the general châracter of the Confession of Faith ?

While it contains a full and faithful exhibition of Scripture truth generally, it is specially anti-Popish and anti-Erastian.

52. Wherein does its anti-Popish character appear ?

It asserts that “the Pope hath no power nor jurisdiction over princes in their dominions, nor over any of their people, and least of all power to deprive them of their dominion or their lives, if he shall judge them heretics, or upon any pretence whatsoever.” — Ch. xxiii. 4.

53. Is not the Pope’s claim to supremacy over the church, as well as to power over kings and nations, renounced in this Confession ?

Yes. It is affirmed that “there is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ, nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that antichrist . . . that exalteth himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God.” — Ch. xxv. 6.

54. What is Erastianism ?

It is the placing of the church or of those matters which come within the province of the church under the authority or administration of the civil magistrate. It is so called from Erastus, who held that the functions of

spiritual government and discipline belong to the civil magistrate.

55. What is the language of this Confession in regard to Erastianism ?

It declares that "The Lord Jesus, as king and head of his church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of church-officers, distinct from the civil magistrate."—Ch. xxx. 1. And again, that "The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven."—Ch. xxiii. 3.

56. Are there not passages in the Confession of Faith which have been urged as favourable to the exercise of an Erastian power by the civil magistrate over the church ?

There are.

57. Can you name some of these ?

Specially the statement in ch. xxiii. 3, that the civil magistrate "hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God."

58. How is this language to be understood and explained ?

It must be understood and explained in harmony with the known principles of the men by whom the Confession was compiled, with the clear and direct statements already quoted, and with the course which the Reformers habitually pursued.

59. Can it be intended that the magistrate is to assume dominion *over* the church ?

No ; for it is expressly affirmed that there is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ.

60. Can it intend that the civil magistrate is to exercise dominion *in* the church ?

It cannot ; for it is declared that “ he may not assume to himself the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven.”

61. Can it mean that he is to determine controversies of faith or cases of conscience, to set down rules and regulations for the better ordering of the public worship of God and government of his church, or that he is to receive complaints in cases of mal-administration, and authoritatively to determine the same ?

No ; for all these things are expressly declared to belong to synods and councils.

62. Can it design that the calling of the magistrate is necessary to the meeting of synods ?

No ; at least the Scottish Church stands clear of such a sentiment, having affirmed

that the church is “free to assemble together synodically, as well *pro re nata* as at the ordinary times, upon delegation from the churches, by *the intrinsical power received from Christ*.”—(Act of Assembly, 1647.)

63. Is it designed to teach that the magistrate may dictate the decisions and procedure of church courts?

No; this would be destructive of a government in the hands of church officers distinct from the civil magistrate.

64. How then is this passage to be understood?

It is to be regarded as affirming the obligation laid on the civil magistrate to seek, in his own province, and in consultation with the church herself, her purity, peace, and efficiency.

65. Has not the Confession of Faith been also charged with teaching persecuting principles?

It has. The charge has been made directly by some, and the United Presbyterian Church has made it indirectly, by excepting such portions *as may be thought to contain* persecuting and intolerant principles.—(Basis of Union, 1820.)

66. What is the passage against which this charge has been most frequently brought?

It is found in chap. xx. 4. “And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to

uphold and preserve one another ; they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation ; or to the power of godliness ; or such erroneous opinions or practices, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them ; are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church ; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church, and *by the power of the civil magistrate.*"

67. Does this passage teach that either the church or the civil magistrate has a right to require of men an implicit faith and an absolute and blind obedience?

No ; for it is expressly declared that to do this would be "to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also," and that God hath left conscience "free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to his word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship."

69. Does this passage acknowledge in the civil magistrate a right to punish men for holding and teaching any opinion that may differ from the commonly received doctrines?

It does not. It expressly restricts this power to such sentiments and practices as place men in opposition to *lawful power, in the lawful exercise of it*—such sentiments and practices as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity.

68. Has the Reformed Presbyterian Church specified and defined what opinions and practices, in her judgment, merit this character?

She has. She holds that “it is his” (the magistrate’s) “duty to see that the violation of the moral law, in open contempt of the being of God, in gross and public idolatry, in open blasphemy of the name of God, or in open profanation of the Sabbath, as well as by injustice, licentiousness, and violence, be duly restrained, as scandalizing to religion and the church of God, as hurtful to the peace and good order of society, &c.”—(Doct. Test. xiii. 9.)

70. May it not be difficult, yea impossible, in certain states of society and of the church, to determine *when*, and *how far*, the civil magistrate may exercise this power?

It may. Such a time is the present; but a good principle is not to be abandoned because there are formidable difficulties in the way of its application.—(Doct. Test. xiii. 9.)

71. Was this Confession imposed by civil authority upon the church as her confession?

It was not. She voluntarily accepted it,

accompanied by her own explanations and cautions, being fully satisfied that it was "most agreeable to the word of God."—(Assem. 1647, Sess. 23.)

72. Is there any truth in the assertion of enemies, that we exalt the Confession of Faith to that place which belongs only to the word of God?

None whatever: we adopt it as expressive of the sense in which we understand the word of God, and as expressive of the sense in which it must be understood by those who seek the fellowship of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

73. What is the duty of such parties in regard to this Confession?

It is their duty to make themselves correctly acquainted with its doctrines, to be satisfied that these are agreeable to the word of God, and to embrace it as the confession of their faith.

IV.—CHURCH GOVERNMENT.

74. Is it not reasonable to conclude that Christ who has given his Church instructions in regard to her doctrines and ordinances, would also prescribe for her the order and government which she must observe?

It is; her unity, purity, efficiency, and prosperity much depend on the course she may pursue in regard to these.

75. Are there not parties who deny that

any instructions are given in the word of God on this subject ?

There are. Some maintain that it is the province of the civil magistrate to determine and regulate the government of the church, others that it appertains to the church to adopt whatever order circumstances may commend.

76. Is there not diversity of sentiment even among those who admit that instructions have been given in the word of God on this subject ?

There is ; some advocate, as scriptural, the Presbyterian Government ; others the Episcopal or Prelatic ; others the Congregational or Independent.

77. What are the distinguishing tenets of Episcopalians on the subject of church government ?

They hold a gradation of official power and authority among ministers ; they represent ministers as of three orders—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons ; and they affirm that the power of rule is lodged in the hands of the bishops only.

78. What are the views of Congregationalists or Independents on this subject ?

That there is no distinction between teaching and ruling elders ; that the power of government is lodged in the body of the people ; that each congregation is a separate independent church ; and that there are no ecclesiastical courts of judicature and review.

79. What are the sentiments of Presbyterians?

They affirm that there is perfect equality in official power and authority among the ministers of the church; that the power of government and discipline is lodged in the hands of office-bearers, distinct from the body of the people; that there are two classes of rulers in the church—those who rule only, and those who not only rule, but labour in word and doctrine; that individual congregations are parts of the church general; and that all the individual parts are subject to the review and authority of the whole.

80. Which of these parties do you regard as most nearly in agreement with the word of God?

The Presbyterian.

81. But are not bishops frequently mentioned in the Scriptures?

They are.

82. What is the precise meaning of the name bishop?

One who superintends or oversees.

83. Does it ever signify one who has superintendence or oversight of ministers?

Never. It always designates those who have the superintendence of a flock.

84. Can you prove from Scripture that the name presbyter or elder and the name bishop intend the same parties, and not distinct orders of men?

Yes. In Acts xx. 17, Paul is said to have

called the elders or presbyters of the Ephesian church, and in verse 28, he addresses these elders by the name bishop. "Take heed, therefore, to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers*,"—the same word which in other passages is rendered bishops.

85. Do you remember any other instance of this?

Yes. In 1 Pet. v. 1, the apostle exhorts elders or presbyters; and in verse 2, he charges these elders to feed the flock of God which is among them, taking the *oversight*, literally the bishopric or episcopate thereof, not by constraint but willingly.—Compare also Tit. i. 5, with Tit i. 7.

86. Were there more bishops than one in particular cities and churches?

There were. Paul when writing to the Philippian church, addresses the bishops. There was a considerable number of bishops in Ephesus, Acts xx. 17, 28. Titus is instructed to ordain elders in every city, ch. i. 5, and these elders are named bishops, ch. i. 7.

87. What is the necessary conclusion from these facts?

That Scripture bishops had not the oversight of ministers, but were themselves ordinary ministers of the word.

88. Are not presbyters spoken of as performing all the acts which Episcopalians now claim as belonging exclusively to Bishops?

They are. To them the ministry of the word and the exercise of rule were committed, 1 Tim. v. 17 ; by them persons were ordained to the office of the ministry, 1 Tim. iv. 14 ; and they had an equal voice with the apostles in the synod of Jerusalem, Acts xv. 6 ; xvi. 4.

89. Does not our Saviour teach principles utterly at variance with the idea that some ministers have an official superiority over others ?

He does, Matt. xx. 25, 27. To his disciples he says, " Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you : but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister ; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant."

90. What occasioned the utterance of these words by the Saviour ?

A desire expressed by two of the disciples to occupy a place of superiority among or over the others, Matt. xx. 20, 21.

91. Did the apostles not exercise a superintendence over *ministers* and *churches* ?

In some instances they did, but the apostolic office and its extraordinary powers ceased upon the death of the twelve.

92. How does this appear ?

From the fact that an apostle must be one who had companied with the disciples during the Saviour's personal ministry on earth,

Acts i. 22, and had the power of working miracles, 2 Cor. xii. 12.

93. Does not Paul claim apostleship although he did not company with the disciples during Christ's personal ministry on earth?

He does; but he had a vision of the Saviour, was miraculously called to the office of apostleship, and was empowered to do the signs of an apostle, 1 Cor. ix. 1; Acts ix.; 2 Cor. xii. 12.

94. Are not Timothy and Titus, in the postscripts to the epistles addressed to them, named bishops?

It is true; but the postscripts, being added by uninspired men, are of no authority; and the nature of the office with which these persons, as Evangelists, were invested, forbids the idea of their permanent appointment to any one place.

95. Are there more than one kind of presbyters in the Christian church?

There are two—presbyters or elders who only rule, and presbyters who not only rule, but labour in word and doctrine, 1 Tim. v. 17; Rom. xii. 8.

96. Have we not another order of church officers mentioned in Scripture, under the name of Deacons?

Yes; we have both the nature of their office and the qualifications necessary to the right performance of its duties described, Acts vi. 1—3; 1 Tim. iii. 8—12.

97. What is the duty assigned to deacons?

“ To take special care in distributing to the necessities of the poor.”—(See Form of Church Government—Deacons ; Doct. Test. xi. 11.)

98. Why were deacons at first appointed ?

Because it was found that a proper attention to the wants of the poor interfered with the devoted performance of the duties of the gospel ministry, Acts vi. 1—4.

99. Does it belong to the Deacon to preach the word, to administer the sacraments, and to exercise rule ?

No.—(See as above.)

100. By whom are the ministers and other office-bearers in a congregation to be chosen ?

By the members of that congregation, Acts i. 15—23 ; vi. 3.

101. By whom are they to be tried in regard to their qualifications ?

By the rulers of the church, 1 Tim. v. 22 ; 2 Tim. ii. 2 ; Titus i. 5, 6.

102. In what manner are they to be set apart to their office ?

By ordination, Acts xiii. 1—3 ; 1 Tim. iv. 14.

103. Is not the people's right to choose their pastors frequently invaded ?

It is so by the law of patronage, which vests the appointment of ministers in parties who, in many instances, have no connection with the church to which they are appointed.

104. Should there be more than one presbyter or elder in each congregation ?

Yes; but the exact number is nowhere specified, Acts xiv. 23.

105. To whom does the government in each congregation belong?

To the eldership.

106. Do not some hold that the government in a congregation is lodged in the members of the church?

Yes; this is the opinion of Independents.

107. Is such an opinion unscriptural?

It is; the Scriptures clearly establish a distinction between those who rule, and those who are called to be subject, 1 Thess. v. 12; Heb. xiii. 7.

108. Could this distinction exist, and the duty of submission be practised, if all were sharers alike in the government?

It could not.

109. What do you mean by the keys of the kingdom of heaven?

The power of rule in the church—the key being the emblem of government, Isa. xxii. 22; Rev. i. 18.

110. To whom were the keys of the kingdom of heaven committed by the Saviour?

To his disciples, and to their successors in the government of the church, Matt. xvi. 19; xviii. 18.

111. Are there not qualifications required in rulers which are not held to be indispensable in the ordinary members of the church—thus proving them to be a distinct class?

Yes ; compare 1 Tim. iii. 4, 5, with Acts ii. 41, 42.

112. Are not all the parts of church power and authority conferred on presbyters, and not on the members of the church generally ?

They are ; the ministry of the word, 2 Cor. v. 18—20 ; the power of discipline, John xx. 23 ; and the power of ordination, 1 Tim. iv. 14.

113. What do you understand by the church to which an individual, after fruitless attempts to gain an offending brother, is instructed to tell the matter ?

The rulers of the church. To them, as we have seen, appertains the power of dealing with offenders. In the case of the church at Jerusalem, which consisted of myriads of members, it would have been impossible to lay any matter before them all.

V.—SUPERIOR JUDICATORIES.

114. Is there any example in Scripture of a number of congregations being united under one government, and spoken of as one church ?

There is. It was so in Jerusalem. The number of Christians in that city was very great, Acts ii. 41, 47 ; iv. 4 ; v. 14 ; xxi. 20. In this last passage the words of James literally are, “Thou seest, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are which believe.” A myriad is ten thousand. These many ten thousands could not all assemble in one place for instruction and worship. One individual

could not address them. They spake different languages, and could not be edified in one assembly. There were also numerous ministers in Jerusalem who could not all find employment in one congregation, Acts vi. 2 ; viii. 1. Notwithstanding, the entire body of Christians in Jerusalem is spoken of as one church, Acts xii. 5 ; xv. 4. The elders of that church are also represented as meeting together and performing acts of common interest, Acts xi. 30 ; xv. 6 ; xxi. 17, 18.

115. Do you remember any other instance of this ?

Yes ; the same things can be established in regard to Ephesus. The number of disciples there was much greater than could meet in one assembly, Acts xix. 18—20 ; there was a considerable number engaged in the work of the ministry, Acts xx. 17, 28 ; yet the Christians at Ephesus are spoken of by the Saviour himself as one church, Rev. ii. 1.

116. Can you produce from Scripture any example of church courts of a more general character, or, as they are commonly named, courts of review ?

The synod or council which was held at Jerusalem, and of which there is a minute account in Acts xv., was precisely of this description.

117. Who were the members of that council ?

The apostles, who had a common relation

to the whole church; the elders or presbyters of the church in Jerusalem; the commissioners from Antioch; with, perhaps, representatives from other places.

118. Who presided in this council?

James, and not Peter, as we might have expected, had he been, as Papists affirm, the prince of the apostles and the vicar of Christ upon earth.

119. Were the resolutions of this council dictated by the Holy Ghost?

No: otherwise there would have been no disputing. They were adopted as the result of a consideration of the facts stated by Peter, and of an appeal by James to the teachings of the Old Testament Scriptures.

120. Were the resolutions adopted by the synod at Jerusalem mere recommendations, which churches might receive or not as they saw good, or authoritative decisions?

They were authoritative decisions. They are expressly named "decrees;" they were applied not merely to the guidance of the church in Antioch, but of the church everywhere; and they were delivered to the people, not to be *considered*, but to be *kept*, Acts xvi. 4.

121. But is it not said that the things determined pleased the whole church, and does not this prove that the members of the church generally took part in framing these decisions?

The whole membership of the church could not be present in one place. Those

private members who were present could only have been consenting to what was done, but not engaged in the doing of it. They were only the apostles and elders who came together to consider the matter submitted to them, Acts xv. 6; and the decrees issued are said to have been ordained of the apostles and elders, Acts xvi. 4.

122. Is not Presbyterianism eminently fitted to preserve the unity of the church?

It is: by its means what deeply concerns every individual portion of the church is brought under review of the church collectively; every part has its voice and share in what is done by the whole; and all the regulations and movements of the church, proceeding from one common source, are impressed with a common character.

123. Is it not also peculiarly fitted to secure the impartial administration of the laws of the church?

Yes. It provides for the removal of cases from decision by parties who might be too much excited or biased to arrive at a deliberate judgment, and for their being submitted to those who are beyond local and party influences.

124. Are not Congregationalists often constrained to do homage to the superiority of Presbyterianism?

They are, by adopting modes of procedure nearly allied to it, and by taking refuge in meetings of church office-bearers, for the

transaction of ecclesiastical business involving the interest of particular congregations, instead of leaving each congregation to decide and act apart.

VI.—CHARACTER AND DUTIES OF CHURCH MEMBERS.

125. Of whom does the visible church consist ?

Of all adults professing the doctrines, submitting to the institutions, and obeying the precepts of Christ, with their children.—(Doct. Test. xi. 4.)

126. By what outward act is the church membership of children formally recognized ?

By their being baptized.

127. Is it not the duty of every one in early life to connect himself with the church, by uniting in her fellowship ?

It is : Acts ii. 47.

128. On what principle ought an individual to proceed in determining with what church he ought to unite himself ?

He ought to set himself to discover what community adheres most closely to the Scripture rule, and give his accession to that which he judges to be the purest.

129. When any one, in making his choice, is influenced merely by the consideration that it is the church of his fathers, that it is the most conveniently situated, that it enjoys the largest amount of popular favour, or that it will impose the least restraint upon

his manner of life, may he expect spiritual prosperity ?

No : Christ has said, " Them that honour me I will honour, but they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

130. At what age ought individuals to unite in the fellowship of the church ?

No particular age can be specified ; but so soon as they are capable of judging and acting for themselves, they ought to profess their faith in Christ, and openly avow themselves to be on the Lord's side.

131. What is necessary in order to dutiful membership in the church ?

Faith is necessary. They deceive themselves who seek admission into the fellowship of the church, without having believed on Christ to the saving of their souls.

132. What ought the rulers of the church to demand as indispensable in order to admission ?

A profession of faith in Christ, and such an outward deportment as evidences this profession to be sincere.

133. Do church rulers who grant easy or indiscriminate admission act the part of kindness or fidelity ?

No : in doing so they are likely to cherish dangerous delusions in the parties admitted, to corrupt and disquiet the church, to make religion and its ordinances despised by the world, and they prostitute the most solemn institutions of the Redeemer.

134. What is required in those who have become members of the church ?

That they walk in all the statutes and commandments of the Lord blamelessly.

135. What are the personal duties of such ?

To devote time *daily* to the reading of the Scriptures, to secret prayer, to religious meditation, and to self-scrutiny, Acts xvii. 11 ; Matt. vi. 6 ; Ps. i. 2 ; 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

136. Ought church members to worship God with their families ?

It is expected and required that they do so *daily*. There may be Christians in a family where there is no family worship, but no family is entitled to the character of a Christian family in which it is neglected.

137. What duties are the members of the church required to perform towards their children ?

Industriously and prudently to provide for them, to see that they are properly educated, to converse with them about the interests of their souls, to train them to the habit of doing what is right ; to endeavour, by warning, by reproof, and even by correction, when indispensable, to dissuade them from what is evil ; to place before them an example fit for their imitation, to engage them in some lawful calling, to have family worship at such a time as they can conveniently wait upon it, and to require their presence ; to habituate them to attendance on public worship ; and to see that they religiously observe

the Sabbath. In one word, to labour in preparing them for serving God here, and in fitting them for glory hereafter.

138. What is their duty towards their servants ?

To treat them with kindness and equity, to instruct and counsel them, to allow them time for attending to their religious duties, especially to grant them the rest of the holy Sabbath, and, as far as possible, to see that they spend it in a dutiful manner.

139. What is their duty towards members of the same church ?

To cultivate friendly acquaintance with them, to seek opportunities for Christian converse and fellowship, to be ready in performing offices of kindness, watchfully to avoid occasions of offence, prudently to seek the removal of misunderstandings where they have arisen, readily to forgive wrongs that may have been sustained, faithfully to admonish when anything is done amiss, and to warn when danger may threaten.

140. What is their duty to the particular congregation of which they are members ?

To acquaint themselves fully with its circumstances, to attend conscientiously its meetings, for consultation and business, cordially to take part in planning and executing its necessary undertakings, liberally to contribute to its funds, and to pray for its purity and prosperity.

141. What is their duty towards their ministers ?

To pray for them, to encourage them, to receive and obey their message, to wait punctually on their ministrations, to bear with their infirmities, to train their families to respect and love them, and to aid in providing them with the means of decent and sufficient maintenance as a matter of *right*, and not of *charity*.

142. What is their duty towards surrounding society ?

To place daily under their notice a living, practical exhibition of the purity, the peacefulness, the benevolence, the industry, and the sagacity which the grace of God teaches ; to stand resolutely aloof from the evils which prevail ; to aid vigorously in their exposure, correction, and removal ; to be forward in helping every measure which tends to elevate, purify, and bless the community in which they live ; and specially to seek that it may be pervaded and regulated by the truth of God.

143. What are their duties towards the world at large ?

To acquaint themselves with its condition ; to endeavour to realize the benighted state in which a large part of it still remains, with its fearful results ; to pray much for the promised enlightenment and happiness of the nations ; to take an affectionate interest in the efforts that are being made for the con-

version and civilization of heathen lands, more especially in the missions of their own church ; and to shew that their interest is real and intense by helping liberally with their worldly substance.

144. What is their duty in regard to the Sabbath ?

To own it as of perpetual and universal obligation ; to cease on that day from conducting or arranging worldly business, from carnal conversation, from pleasure-seeking, from ordinary visiting, from all political and non-religious reading, and from indolent inaction ; to accept it joyfully as a precious season for quiet meditation, for religious reading, for domestic instruction, and for waiting upon public worship ; to stand aloof decidedly from the various modes in which it is desecrated ; to plead its claims and promote its sanctification among all classes ; and to unite with the friends of religion in protecting it against the attempted inroads of its enemies.

145. Can there be a vigorous and successful performance of relative duties where there is not an habitual attention paid to the cultivation of personal piety ?

It is impossible.

146. May those who care exclusively for their own things, while they decline any effort or sacrifice for the good of others, and for the public interests of religion, expect much spiritual prosperity to their own souls ?

No: "the liberal soul deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand."

VII.—THE NATIONAL VOWS.

147. Are not nations, as such, the subjects of God's moral government?

Most unquestionably they are.

148. How does this appear?

God is declared to be "the Governor among the nations;" he instructs and counsels nations; he promises to them national blessings, as the reward of their obedience, and actually confers them; he judges, threatens, and punishes rebellious nations, Ps. xxii. 28; Isa. xlvii.; Jer. iv. 1, 2.

149. What is the duty of nations to God as their Moral Governor?

It is their duty to acknowledge his authority, to take heed that their national institutions and movements be in harmony with his revealed will, and formally to pledge their allegiance to him.

150. Is there any instance on record, impressed with Divine approbation, of nations thus formally covenanting or pledging their allegiance to the Most High?

There is. Israel publicly covenanted their service to God at Mount Sinai, and were expressly accepted in so doing. In numerous instances also we find that people, under the awakening influence of special providences, or in times of spiritual revival, renewed their covenant with God.

151. But was not national covenanting with God limited to the period of the Old Testament dispensation, and peculiar to the Jews?

By no means. It is promised by God that this practice shall prevail in New Testament times, and that not only among the Jews, but among the nations of the converted Gentiles, Isa. xix. 18, 20.

152. What good purpose can national covenanting to be for God serve, seeing the nations are, irrespective of their vows, under obligation to serve him?

Such covenanting is a formal recognition of national duty, is eminently fitted to deepen a sense of obligation, and to cause unity and energy in fulfilling it.

153. Have you any proof that national covenanting is a most efficient means for promoting the interests of truth and righteousness among a people?

We have the testimony of God himself. He affirms that Israel's entering into covenant with him was, *in order to establish them for a people to himself*, Deut. xxix. 10—13. The means which God employs must be better fitted than all others to secure the object contemplated.

154. Can a nation ever be released from the obligation of the covenant to serve God into which it has entered?

If the thing covenanted be specific, the obligation of the covenant terminates when

the thing vowed has been fully accomplished. Where the covenant pledges general fidelity, or respects objects of permanent importance, the obligation must be perpetual.

155. May a nation not release itself from its covenant obligations by renouncing them, and by pledging itself to an opposite course?

A nation is no more at liberty to violate its covenant with God than an individual is, and no act of its can annul God's inalienable claim to its dutiful obedience.

156. Can you produce any proof from Scripture that national covenants, when of a righteous character, are of perpetual obligation, notwithstanding any change in the mind or practice of the nation covenanting?

Yes: Moses, when speaking of the covenant into which Israel entered with God at Sinai, after forty years had elapsed, and after all who were upwards of twenty years at the time when this covenant was formed had been cut off, says, "The Lord made a covenant with *us* in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but *with us, even with us, who are all of us here alive this day,*" Deut. v. 2, 3. It is also called the *everlasting* covenant, Isa. xxiv. 5. Israel, in the days of Jeremiah, are charged with having broken the covenant which God made with their fathers, Jer. xi. 10, which it was impossible for them to do, had its obligation not rested on them. Moreover, all the judgments by which Israel were finally overtaken are traced

to their guilt in breaking this covenant, Jer. xxii. 9.

157. Can you produce any other instance of a covenant, made by a nation in one age, resting in its obligation upon the men of a succeeding age ?

Yes : the covenant made by the Israelites with the people of Gibeon, involved that people in the Divine displeasure more than four hundred years after, because they violated its engagements, Joshua ix. ; 2 Sam. xxi. 1, 2 ; Tyre also is threatened because she remembered not the brotherly covenant, Amos, i. 9.

158. Is not this principle generally recognised and acted upon by men in regard to matters both civil and religious ?

It is. The heir of an estate is held liable for the engagements of those who have preceded him. The National Debt, contracted in a former age, rests in all its obligations upon the men of the present generation. The Magna Charta is appealed to as still in force, although framed more than 600 years ago. The Revolution Settlement also, and the Act of Union are held as still binding, although more than 150 years old.

159. Were not the friends of truth, during their struggles for the reformation of religion, in the habit of entering into covenants—thus pledging themselves to God and to one another ?

They were.

160. Do you remember any instances in which they did so, while their movements had not as yet assumed a national character ?

Yes : the League of Smalcalde was framed by the German Reformers in 1530, and renewed five years afterwards ; the senate and people of Geneva pledged themselves by an oath to the principal articles of the Christian religion and discipline in 1537 ; and in 1571, a solemn vow was entered into by the Reformers, and a multitude of the Waldensian churches, to maintain inviolably the union among all the faithful of the evangelical religion.

161. Was not the same practice followed by the friends of religion in our native land ?

It was. In 1580, the National Covenant was subscribed by the king and his household, and in 1581, by all ranks. It was renewed in 1590, 1596, and again in a very solemn manner in 1638.

162. What were the objects engaged to in this covenant ?

The renunciation of Popery, and in terms of the supplementary bond of 1638, of Prelacy also ; the steadfast maintenance of the true religion ; and unwavering fidelity to one another, and to the civil magistrate, in prosecuting these objects.

163. Was this covenant accepted by the nation generally ?

Perhaps there never was any measure

hailed with such cordial and universal welcome.

164. Was it successful in securing the objects contemplated ?

It was so in an eminent degree. Popery was defeated in all its unhallowed attempts, and Spottiswood, the head of the Prelates in Scotland, was constrained to exclaim, "Now, all that we have been doing these thirty years past, has been thrown down."

165. Were those who entered into this covenant justly charged with rebellion in so doing ?

No : the most eminent lawyers affirmed that there was nothing decidedly illegal in the procedure of the Covenanters.

166. Has not this covenant resulted in very great advantages, both civil and religious, to our native land ?

It saved our country from absolute despotism ; and to it we may trace all the successful efforts made by the inhabitants of Great Britain, in defence of their freedom, during the succeeding reigns of the Stuarts—(Aikman's History).

167. Can you mention any other instance of covenanting among the friends of the truth in this country ?

Yes ; the Solemn League and Covenant.

168. When was it framed ?

In 1643.

169. What circumstances led to the adoption of such a measure ?

Specially the arrival of Commissioners from both Houses of Parliament in England, and from the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, bearing letters to the Convention of Estates and General Assembly, setting forth the deplorable condition of the kingdom of England, and beseeching their fervent prayers and advice as to what further might be done for the making of their own and the kingdom's peace with God, and for the uniting of the Protestant party more firmly, that they might all serve God with one consent, and stand up against Antichrist as one man.

170. By whom was the draft of this Solemn League and Covenant prepared ?

A committee of Assembly, along with Commissioners from England, was appointed for this purpose. It was actually drawn up by Mr. Alexander Henderson.

171. Did this draft obtain general approbation ?

It was cordially approved by the General Assembly and Convention of Estates in Scotland. With a few inconsiderable alterations, it was adopted by the Westminster Assembly. It was also approved by both Houses of Parliament

172. Did the kingdom of England generally enter into this Solemn League ?

It did : indeed it is impossible to conceive how it could have been rendered more emphatically a national engagement. On Monday, 26th Sept., 1643, the Assembly of Divines

and both Houses of Parliament met in the church of St. Margaret's, Westminster, and each person, with uncovered head and uplifted hands, swore to the performance of the different Articles in succession. It was formally subscribed by them, and ordered by Parliament to be taken by all parties in the kingdom above eighteen years of age. To prepare them for this, it was ordained to be read and explained to every congregation.

173. Did Scotland *nationally* concur in this covenant ?

Yes. The Estates of Parliament "did ratify, approve, and confirm it, and ordained it to have the full force and strength of a perfect law and Act of Parliament." The General Assembly declares that "they all, with one voice, approve the same, and recommend it to be subscribed and sworn by all his majesty's good subjects within the kingdom." The Westminster Assembly affirms that "the whole body of Scotland had subscribed and sworn it, with rejoicing at the Oath." It was also taken and subscribed by the king himself in 1650, and again in 1651.

174. Did the inhabitants of Ireland accede to this covenant ?

Yes: "It was taken by many Protestants in the South, and by almost the whole body of the Protestant population in the North."

175. You then consider these nations as having nationally committed themselves to

the principles and objects of the Solemn League ?

I do. "It was framed and concluded by the representatives of the kingdom, in concurrence with those of the church. It was sworn by them in their public capacity, at their call, and by their authority. It was afterwards sworn by the people in their different ranks and orders. And, finally, it was ratified and pronounced valid by laws, both civil and ecclesiastical. The public faith was thus plighted by all the organs through which a nation is accustomed to express its mind and will."—(M'Crie's Unity).

176. What are the great principles assumed in the Solemn League ?

That communities or nations are under the moral Government of God, and bound to yield obedience to his law—that nations may enter into covenant with God—and that public covenanting is a valuable means of promoting true religion.—(Rev. S. Bates, D.D.)

177. Are these principles scriptural ?

We have already proved them to be so. "The great principles of this bond are the principles of the Bible itself."—(Hetherington.)

178. What were the objects which the Covenanters engaged to prosecute ?

They engaged to preserve the true Protestant religion—to propagate and extend the Reformation—to promote unity and uni-

formity in religion—to maintain civil and religious liberty—to abolish Prelacy—and to secure for the church the free and unfettered exercise of her authority in spiritual matters.—(Dr. Bates on the Sol. League.)

179. Was not the Solemn League productive of happy effects on the civil liberty of these kingdoms?

It was. “But for it, so far as men may judge, these kingdoms would have been placed beneath the deadening influence of absolute despotism; and in the fate of Britain, the liberty and civilization of the world would have sustained a fatal, paralyzing shock.”—(Hetherington.)

180. Must not the advantages to the cause of religion and morality have been very great, had this covenant been faithfully kept?

Undoubtedly they would.—(See M'Crie's Unity.)

181. Is there any truth in the allegation of enemies that this covenant is at variance with the honour due to civil rulers?

None whatever: the Covenanters bound themselves to preserve and defend the king's person in the preservation and defence of the true religion and liberties of the kingdom. More than this could not be required nor given by God-fearing men; they, moreover, protested that “they had no intention to diminish his majesty's just power and authority.”

182. Has not the Solemn League been represented as of a persecuting and intolerant character ?

It frequently has.

183. Why ?

Because the Covenanters engage to seek the extirpation of Popery and Prelacy, &c.

184. Is this charge of intolerance well founded ?

It is not ; they are systems and principles, and practical evils, not *persons*, to which they avow their hostility. The Westminster Assembly say in their exhortation : “ Nor is any man bound to offer violence to their (the Prelatists’) persons.”

185. But was not this Covenant enforced by “ civil pains ? ”

This phrase is indeed employed, but it seems evident from history, that it implied nothing more than the exclusion of parties hostile to the objects of the Covenant, from places of power and trust.—(Rev. W. Symington, D.D , Lect. on Second Reformation.)

186. Was not this necessary to the stability and right administration of that system which had been introduced ?

It was. It would have been madness to have entrusted the guardianship of their principles, and the achieving of their objects, to the avowed enemies of both.

187. Does not our country act on the same principle at the present day ?

It does. All persons admitted to places of power and trust are required to swear an oath of fealty to the existing state of things ; those declining to do so, remain excluded.

188. Does our approbation of the Covenants necessarily imply our approbation of everything done by the Covenanters for enforcing them, and for securing their objects ?

It does not. While we hold the Covenants to be scriptural and excellent, there may have been imprudencies and errors in the measures adopted for accomplishing their objects. The Reformed Presbyterian Church has expressly said : “ We do not declare our approbation of all the Acts of Parliament and Assembly that were passed in that period in reference to religion.” “ We admit that some of them were unjustifiable.”—(Hist. Test. p. 105.)

189. Is it any valid objection to these Covenants, that they refer to both civil and religious matters ?

No more than it is to the Bible itself, of which the same thing is true. Had it been otherwise, they would not have been adapted to meet the complex evils by which our forefathers were assailed.

190. Do these Covenants still rest in their obligation upon these kingdoms ?

They do.

191. What are your reasons for affirming this ?

The things engaged to in these Covenants are scriptural and right; they were concluded by the representatives of the people, and cordially entered into by the people themselves; they were ratified and confirmed by public legislative acts; the identity of the nation is as real in all moral respects as the identity of an individual; the things engaged to, have not been fully accomplished; and it is inherently sinful in the nation to regard them with indifference, or to follow a course at variance with them.

192. Is it just to represent these Covenants as merely an engagement of the three kingdoms to one another, and to urge that, because one party has failed, the others are set free?

Very far from it. The kingdoms were not merely pledged to *one another*, but united in a vow *to God*, that they would seek the objects specified.

193. Do you regard the parties renouncing these Covenants, or acting in direct opposition to them, as guilty of perjury?

We would avoid the use of provoking epithets, but such parties are certainly proving themselves unfaithful in what they promised to God; are breaking their engagements to one another; and are gainstanding what is inherently right, and divinely required?

194. What is the duty of a minority when the nations, as such, have renounced and violated their vows?

It is their duty to cherish a sense of their own covenant obligations ; to refrain from following a multitude to do evil ; to labour assiduously in prosecuting the ends of these covenants ; to exhibit kindly, yet faithfully, the guiltiness of that course which the nations are pursuing ; and by every lawful means to seek their return to that position of fidelity which they have abandoned ?

195. What, then, were the more prominent parts of the Second Reformation ?

These four, viz. : the revival of the National Covenant, with a bond renouncing Prelacy and the five articles of Perth ; the putting down of Prelacy by the Assembly held at Glasgow, 1638 ; the adoption of the Solemn League and Covenant, whereby Scotland became united with England and Ireland in an anti-papal and anti-prelatical alliance ; and the approval and acceptance of the Calvinistic and Presbyterian Standards drawn up by the Westminster Divines. — (Free Church Cat. Ques. 175.)

196. What were some of the great principles assumed and acted on in the Second Reformation ?

The universal supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ ; the spiritual independence of the church ; the supreme and ultimate authority of the word of God ; the duty of national covenanting with God, and the inviolable obligation of national covenants when formed ; and the duty of holding fast attainments that

have been reached, of advancing in reformation. and of extending its blessings to others. —(Rev. A. Symington, D.D.)

197. Who are the legitimate successors of the Church of the Second Reformation ?

Those who most faithfully adhere to her principles, who hold fast her attainments, homologate her vows, and prosecute the objects which she covenanted to seek.

198. Were not measures of a practical character adopted to perpetuate and advance attainments so important, and reached after so much effort ?

Yes ; the Act of Classes was framed, in terms of which all persons known to be disaffected to the established order of things were removed from the army and navy, and excluded from all offices of power and trust.

199. Was such an act just and reasonable ?

Most unquestionably it was. It would be supreme folly in a nation, after having established a certain order of things, and pledged itself by solemn vows to its support, forthwith to place the power of hindering and changing it in the hands of its avowed enemies.

VIII.—OVERTHROW OF THE COVENANTED REFORMATION.

200. Did this scriptural and greatly desirable state of things prove of long continuance ?

No : its decisive commencement was in 1638, and it continued to make progress until 1649.

201. Was the government of Cromwell, which immediately followed, unfavourable to the Reformation ?

It was: he favoured the Independents, who increased in numbers and in influence ; and being jealous of the Scottish Church, he interdicted the meetings of her General Assemblies, and imposed injurious restraints on ministerial freedom.—(Baillie, vol. 2, Letter 193.)

202. Was not the conduct of the Covenanters themselves highly impolitic, and greatly injurious to the cause which they had so much at heart ?

Yes ; and especially in what they did from an undue attachment to the house of Stuart.

203. In what did this undue attachment appear ?

(1) In their undertaking a rash and uncalled-for war in order to rescue Charles I. out of the hands of the sectaries, although he had ever evinced himself to be an enemy to the Reformation, which had been established in spite of him.

(2) In their proclaiming his son Charles II., and promising their fidelity to him, although they had abundant evidence of his hostility to their cause.

(3) In their consent given to the repeal of the Act of Classes, by which the known enemies of the Reformation were excluded from places of power and trust.

204. What injurious results followed ?

Persons opposed to the Reformation were crowded into the most important stations in the army and in the civil government, and the hostility of England was incurred.— (Hist. Test. pp. 118, 119.)

205. Was the consent given to the repeal of the Act of Classes unanimous?

It was not. While a majority, obtained by the management of the King and Parliament, concurred in the resolutions on behalf of the measure, a large minority *protested* against them as unjustifiable and dangerous.

206. Did the passing of these resolutions cause a permanent breach among the Covenanters?

It did.

207. By what names were the two parties known?

By the names of RESOLUTIONERS and PROTESTERS.

208. Which of these parties is to be held as having adhered most faithfully to the Reformation, and as prosecuting the objects of the national vows?

The Protesters. This is proved by the nature of the measure against which they protested, and by the results which followed.

209. Was not the restoration of Charles II., in 1660, specially fatal to the cause of the Second Reformation?

It was: that perfidious monarch violated without scruple, and in the most flagrant

manner, all his solemn engagements on its behalf.

210. What measures fatal to the Reformation immediately followed in England ?

The Episcopal hierarchy was restored without modification, and by an act of uniformity, about two thousand ministers were driven from their flocks in one day, and forbidden the exercise of their ministry.

211. What happened in Scotland ?

Every thing was done which malice or ingenuity could dictate to obliterate the very name and memory of the Reformation, to load it with infamy, and to oppress all who dared to avow their attachment to it.

212. Can you specify some of the measures hostile to the Reformation that were adopted in Scotland ?

It was affirmed that the ordering of the external government and policy of the church properly belongs to his Majesty ; the covenanted Reformation, and all that had been done in accomplishing it, were pronounced " treasonable and rebellious ; " the Assembly of 1638 was declared to be an " unlawful and seditious meeting," and all its acts to " be null and void ; " the National Covenant and Solemn League were branded as " unlawful oaths," and the obligation of them was discharged ; all acts or constitutions, *ecclesiastical* or civil, approving of these Covenants were annulled ; Prelacy was restored ; it was enacted to be " treasonable and rebellious " to

maintain that it is lawful for subjects, on any pretence, to enter into leagues and covenants; all persons in public office were ordained to take an oath embodying the above principles; all who should, by word or writing, condemn this new order of things, or the royal supremacy by which it was introduced, or justify any of those things annulled or condemned, were declared incapable of any office, and liable to such further pains as are due by the law in such cases.—(Wodrow, book i. cap. 3.)

213. Did these enactments issue in oppressive proceedings?

They did. Faithful ministers were ejected in great numbers, and prohibited from the exercise of their office, unless they should receive collation from a bishop; and severe penal laws were made and enforced against field-preaching. In a word, during the long period of twenty-eight years, many thousands—because of their attachment to the Reformation, their refusal to violate their vows, or to own the king's supremacy in spiritual things, and what was done in virtue of it—were fined, imprisoned, tortured, banished, or put to death.—(See Wodrow *passim*.)

214. But were not indulgences repeatedly granted, under which ministers were permitted the exercise of their ministry, and of which a considerable number availed themselves?

Yes: such indulgences were granted on

three different occasions—in 1669, 1672, and in 1679.

215. Was the acceptance of these indulgences consistent with a steadfast adherence to the Reformation, and to the national vows?

It was not.

216. What are your reasons for such an opinion?

(1) Because these indulgences were granted in the exercise of the royal supremacy in matters of religion.

(2) Because they were granted on grossly Erastian conditions.

(3) Because it was their design to divide and weaken the Covenanters.

(4) Because those who accepted them were brought into direct alliance with the persecutors.

(5) Because the compliance of some increased the fury of the persecutors against the more faithful.

217 Do you, then, regard those who refused to accept of these indulgences as the consistent Covenanters?

Yes; they alone maintained the headship of Christ in its practical bearings, and resisted the measures by which it was invaded.

218. Did the persecuted Covenanters continue their allegiance to their cruel oppressor, Charles II.?

They became at last convinced that it was one of the grievous sins of the nation, that it had endured and supported him so long.

219. Can you name any of the parties by whom the duty of renouncing allegiance to Charles was advocated ?

Cameron, Douglas, Cargill, and Renwick occupied a distinguished place among them.

220. On what grounds did they justify such a course ?

They maintained that Charles had been received by Scotland as a sworn supporter of the Reformation ; that he was bound by his coronation oath to maintain the religion and liberties of the nation inviolate ; that the whole course of his reign had been in outrageous violation of his oath ; that he had invaded the prerogatives of the Son of God, by usurping supremacy over the church ; that he had overturned the whole fabric of Scotland's Reformation ; that he had violently restored Episcopacy, which himself and the nation had sworn to extirpate ; that he had changed the civil government into an intolerable despotism ; that he had filled public offices with profligate and cruel men ; that he had poisoned the sources of justice ; and that he had proscribed, plundered, imprisoned, sold into slavery, and put to death multitudes of the best subjects for peaceably assembling to worship God.—(See Hist. Test. p. 147, Queensferry Papers, Declarations at Lanark and Sanquhar, &c.)

221. Has not the correctness of these representations been abundantly established by the historians of that period ?

It has. — (See Wodrow, Hetherington, Crookshank, Aikman, Macaulay, &c.)

222. Could the Covenanters have consistently followed any other course than this ?

They could not. It had become impossible for them to render allegiance to the existing power, and at the same time to abide by their own vows, and act on their own principles.

223. What would you answer to those who maintain that the Covenanters, in renouncing their allegiance to Charles, proceeded to an unwarrantable extreme ?

That the principles upon which they acted had been held by Knox, Buchanan, Rutherford, Owen, and Milton ; that they were embodied in the Solemn League and Covenant, in which the nation stood pledged to the defence of the king's authority, *in the preservation and defence of the true religion and liberties of the kingdom* ; that they were clearly expressed in the acknowledgment of sins and engagement to duties, sanctioned by the General Assembly and Convention of Estates in 1648 ; that they were avowed and acted upon by the nation at the Revolution in 1688 ; and that no one can refuse assent to them without questioning the title of the present sovereign to the throne of Great Britain.

224. But did they not, by this step, place themselves in opposition to God's command, " Let every soul be subject to the higher

powers," Rom. xiii. 1. ; and, " Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake," 1 Pet. ii. 13 ?

They did not. They never refused allegiance to powers ordained and defined of God, but to what was a perversion and abuse of his ordinance. They refused to submit to the ordinance of men only because it had become such that fidelity to God forbade them to countenance it. They demanded for themselves and their countrymen their inalienable birthright bestowed by God himself. They adhered to the constitutional compact, made and sworn between the king and the people, and acknowledged by both as God's ordinance. They insisted on the conditions upon which the sovereign had obtained and accepted power.

225. What measures did they adopt for making known and vindicating the constitutional character of the step they had adopted ?

They published joint declarations at Lanark, Rutherglen, and Sanquhar.

226. Does the Reformed Presbyterian Church stand committed to these joint declarations ?

"She would not be understood as espousing every sentiment or expression contained in them, but she regards them as exhibiting a distinct and energetic view of the true grounds of the pending contest, as displaying hallowed zeal for God, surpassing love to his

church, and magnanimous contempt of danger.”—(Hist. Test. p. 151.)

227. What was the effect of the course pursued by the Covenanters in disowning Charles?

It was followed by a fearful increase of suffering to themselves; but to the vigorous assertion of their principles the nation stands indebted for the Revolution.—(Crookshank, p. 263.)

228. Have not the Covenanters of this period been charged with pleading a right to rob and assassinate those who differed from them?

They have, but most unjustly. They themselves say, in answer to this charge: “We disown as horrid murder the killing of any because of a different persuasion and opinion from us.”—(Informatory Vindication.)

IX.—REVOLUTION SETTLEMENT.

229. By what event were the sufferings of the Covenanters terminated?

By the Revolution of 1688.

230. Wherein did that Revolution consist?

In the substitution of William, Prince of Orange, for James VII.

231. Did not the nation, at the Revolution, largely act on those principles in regard to civil government for the assertion of which the Covenanters had suffered?

They did. The Scottish Convention unani-

mously declared that James VII *had forfeited* the crown.—(Hist. Test. p. 151.)

232. Were not the Covenanters among the foremost to make offer of their allegiance to William ?

They were: on condition that the “legal authority should be devolved on him, with such necessary limitations and provisions as might give just and legal security for the peace and purity of religion, stability of the laws, privileges of Parliament, and liberties of the people, civil and ecclesiastic.”—(Crookshank, vol ii., p. 480.)

233. What proof did they furnish of their sincerity and zeal in making this offer ?

In one day they raised 800 men, and promised to raise two or three regiments more, if his majesty should have occasion for them.

234. Did they not ultimately esteem it their duty to decline connection with the *Church*, as established by the Revolution Settlement ?

They did.

235. What were their objections to the Revolution Church ?

That her judicatories were composed of men against whom they had grave charges ; that the Scottish Reformation in its most advanced and matured state was deliberately abandoned ; that an Erastian power over the Church was claimed and exercised by the State ; and that the principles upon which the Church's settlement was based were

political rather than *religious*.—(Hist. Test. pp. 164—169.)

236. What were their grave charges against the parties that composed the judicatories of the Church ?

That there were among them individuals,

(1) Who had espoused the cause of the public Resolutions.

(2) Who had taken the wicked oaths and bonds prescribed by government.

(3) Who had accepted indulgencies, clogged by Erastian restrictions, and conferred in the exercise of Erastian power.

(4) Who had accepted and expressed their gratitude for the deceitful toleration of James VII.

(5) Who had been active persecutors.

237. How does it appear that the Scottish Reformation, in its most advanced and matured state, was deliberately abandoned in the Revolution Settlement ?

The Act Rescissory, annulling the principal points of that Reformation, was allowed to remain in full force ; the authority of reforming Assemblies, and of their acts, was not acknowledged even by the Church ; the obligation of the public covenants was never owned by the Church, nor does even their name occur in one of her public deeds ; all attempts to revive the memory of the Second Reformation were rudely repulsed in her courts ; and the Act of 1592 being adopted

as her charter, the Second Reformation was treated as a nullity.

238. Can you specify any instance of Erastian power claimed and exercised by the State, and timidly submitted to by the Revolution Church ?

Yes : Presbyterianism was enacted as her government, by the sole authority of the King and Parliament ; the Confession of Faith was prescribed as her creed by the same authority, without her own judgment being asked or waited for ; her discipline was interfered with and subverted by the State's determining on what conditions ministers should be received by her ; her worship, both in kind and manner, was in some points enacted by civil statutes ; the liberty of her Assemblies was invaded ; and the manner in which her ministers must be appointed was defined by civil statutes.—(Revolution Settlement, by Rev. J. Graham.)

239. What proof can you produce that the Revolution Settlement was based on *political* and not on religious grounds ?

Prelacy was abolished solely because it was an insupportable grievance to the people, and contrary to their inclinations ; and Presbytery was established because it was agreeable to the inclinations of the people, and not because of any scriptural claim that could be preferred on its behalf.

240. On what grounds are Covenanters

justified in continuing in a state of separation from the Revolution Church *now* ?

Their reasons for declining its fellowship at first abide in full force, and others, in the progress of things, have been added.

241. Is not the character of the civil constitution to which the Revolution Church united, and of which it forms a part, a sufficient reason for continued dissent ?

It is : “ It wants those scriptural qualifications without which a union between Church and State can neither be lawful nor beneficial. —(Hist. Test. p. 171.)

242. What do you regard as peculiarly objectionable in that civil constitution ?

It makes Episcopal ministers, under the name of “ Lords Spiritual,” an integral part of the legislature ; it embodies Prelacy, and provides, so far as can be done, for its perpetuity in England and Ireland ; and it invests in the Crown, as one of its inherent rights, a perpetual and undisguised supremacy over the church in these kingdoms.— (Hist. Test. p. 171 ; “ Claims of the Divine Government,” with the authorities there quoted.)

243. Have you any other reason for continued separation from the Revolution Church ?

Yes ; her habitual subserviency to the Erastian encroachments of the State.

244. In what has this been manifested ?

In regard to her Assemblies, when prohibited by civil authority ; in her admission of Episcopal curates into her fellowship, upon

conditions dictated by the State ; in her consenting to wear the ignominious yoke of patronage ; in her accepting terms of admission to the ministry, prescribed by civil statutes ; in her tamely enduring the inflicting of *ecclesiastical censures* upon ministers by the civil power, as the punishment of civil offences ; and in an indiscriminate compliance with civil commands to observe days of fasting and thanksgiving.—(Hist. Test. pp. 172—179 ; “ Plain Reasons.”)

245. Has there not also been prevailing unsoundness in doctrine in the Revolution Church ?

There has. “ Her decisions in matters of heresy have been incalculably pernicious, and prove to demonstration, that however orthodox the *Confession* of the Church might be, *a majority of her ministers* who had subscribed that Confession had made shipwreck of the faith, and of a good conscience.”—(Hist. Test. pp. 178, 183 ; Pamphlets, by Drs. Chalmers and Cunningham, in the Non-intrusion Controversy.)

246. Has not her discipline been such as to require the continued dissent of those who contend for the church’s purity ?

Yes ; it has been liable to the threefold charge of *laxity*, *partiality*, and *tyranny*.—(Hist. Test. pp. 183—188.)

247. Is it, then, your deliberate judgment, that no faithful adherent of the Second Reformation, or of the principles upon which it

was based, can consistently unite with the Revolution Church ?

It is.

248. Wherein do you regard the Revolution Church as inferior to the Church of the Second Reformation, and at variance with it ?

In faithfulness to preceding Reformations ; in regard to the recognition of the Divine right and original of Presbyterian Church Government ; in faithful opposition to Prelacy ; in the assertion of the freedom of ecclesiastical assemblies ; in reference to lay Patronage ; in respect to covenanting ; as to the principles on which allegiance to civil rulers is inculcated ; with regard to purity of doctrine, and as respects faithfulness in discipline.—(Hist. Test. pp. 190—193.)

X.—DISSENT FROM THE STATE.

249. Did the consistent Covenanters esteem it enough to decline the fellowship of the Revolution Church only ?

No: they felt constrained to protest against the civil state, and to decline, in all competent ways, its fellowship also.

250. Was it with the particular form of the civil government that they were dissatisfied ?

No ; they believed that its *form* might vary, while moral character and scriptural claim were fully retained by it.

251. Was it the expulsion of the house of

Stuart, and the substitution of the Prince of Orange, that awakened their hostility ?

No ; they welcomed the Prince of Orange most cordially, and proffered their allegiance to him, on such conditions as they esteemed consistent and dutiful.

252. Was there anything in the personal character of the Ruler that induced their protest ?

No.

253. Was it caused by any gross invasion or outrage of men's civil rights by the government ?

It was not. They frankly acknowledge that "the rights of men are as well secured, and as faithfully guarded, in Britain, as, perhaps, in any other nation on the earth."

254. On what grounds, then, did they protest against the civil state, and maintain a condition of separation from it ?

Because of evils embodied in the civil constitution, and practised by the administration ; and because the new state of things was in many particulars directly opposite to that by which they had solemnly vowed to abide.

255. What are some of those evils embodied in the constitution to which you refer ?

Some of these have been mentioned in answer to Quest. 242. In addition to these, the civil constitution provides that the Sovereign *must be* a member of the Prelatical church, and *as the condition of reigning*, that she shall maintain it in all its privileges ; and

t freely admits men to power, without regard either to their moral or religious character. —(Hist. Test. p. 171, "Claims of the Divine Government," p. 23, with the authority there quoted.)

256. Are not the Sovereign and nation bound together by a solemn covenant to maintain the constitution in which these evils are embodied, and of which they are essential parts ?

They are : the one in the Coronation Oath, and the other in the reciprocal Oath of Allegiance that is taken to the crown.

257. You, then, regard the British nation and its Rulers as having not merely renounced and proscribed the attainments of the Second Reformation and the national vows, but as having entered into a covenant in direct opposition to them ?

I do.

258. Is it possible for those who adhere to the one, consistently to connect themselves with the other, and to give it their approbation and support ?

It is not. They are directly contrary.

259. Are they not called upon formally and specially to protest against a constitution embodying such evils, and subversive of such precious attainments and vows ?

They are ; otherwise they would be unfaithful to the Redeemer, whose honour is so directly invaded, and the requirements of whose word are so grossly violated.

260. But seeing the establishment of Prelacy, and the Royal Supremacy in matters of religion, do not extend to Scotland, are not the inhabitants of that kingdom, who own the constitution, clear of these evils ?

By no means ; they become consenting parties to their existence and perpetuity, and positively pledge themselves to their support, at least in England and Ireland, which is as unjust as to maintain them in Scotland, and more ungenerous.

261. Have there not also been such evils in administration of the civil government as require dissent and separation from it ?

There have.

262. Will you specify some of these ?

By the State the Scottish Church was fettered, corrupted, and turned backward in the Revolution Settlement ; the unscriptural and grievous yoke of Patronage was imposed on her ; unnecessary and oppressive Oaths have been frequently required ; sanguinary penal laws were for a long time enacted and enforced ; intimate relations at home and abroad have been formed with the abettors and champions of antichrist ; the power of the nation has been employed in protecting, and her treasures in propagating the Romish faith ; she has taken a leading part in questionable and sanguinary wars ; for a long time she legalized the unhallowed traffic in human beings ; and she has been extensively involved, by connivance, by the practice

of her Rulers, and by Legislation, in the violation of the holy Sabbath.—(Hist. Test. pp. 194—200.)

XI.—PROGRESS OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

263. Were not the adherents of the Second Reformation left for a considerable time after the Revolution without ministers ?

Yes, about 16 years. Messrs. Shields, Linning, and Boyd, who had been educated at their expense, proved unfaithful to them, and joined the Revolution Church.

264. By what means was their separate existence maintained during this period ?

By their meetings for fellowship and prayer, and by a system of regular correspondence.

265. What minister first united with them ?
The Rev. John M'Millan of Balmaghie.

266. When did his accession take place ?
In 1706.

267. What induced him to this step ?

An agreement with them in sentiment ; the painful failure of all his attempts to recall the Revolution Church to the position of fidelity ; and the injustice with which he was treated in making these attempts.

268. Was Mr. M'Millan shortly after joined by other ministers ?

Yes ; Mr. John M'Neil, a licentiate of the Established Church, embraced the same cause, and continued faithfully to labour until his death in 1732. Respect for the

ordinance of Presbytery prevented his being ordained.

269. When was the first Presbytery constituted?

In 1743, upon the accession of the Rev. Thomas Nairne from the Secession Church.

270. What name did it assume?

“The Reformed Presbytery.”

271. Was not the duty of covenanting repeatedly engaged in about this period?

Yes: in 1712, at Auchensaugh, and in 1745, at Crawfordjohn.

272. What induced attention to this duty at these particular times?

In the former instance, they were prompted by a new departure from the Reformation attainments and from the national vows, in the Act of Union, and the restoration of lay-patronage; in the latter, by the fact that they had obtained a regular church organization.

273. Does the Reformed Presbyterian Church stand committed to these acts of Covenant-renovation?

Not formally; neither can she approve of every circumstance connected with them, and of every expression employed; but she “approves of the zeal and faithfulness which prompted our fathers to these acts, and admits that we are under superadded obligations to adhere to these covenants in consequence of their deeds of renovation.”

274. Was not the Reformed Presbyterian

Church subjected, at this early period, to a severe trial in regard to orthodoxy ?

Yes: two of her ministers, the Rev. Messrs. Hall and Innes, taught the doctrine of an indefinite atonement, and in 1752 were separated from her fellowship.

275. When was the first Judicial Act, Declaration, and Testimony published ?

In 1761.

276. By whom was it written ?

The historical part was drawn up by the Rev. John Courtass, and the doctrinal part by the Rev. John Thorburn.

277. When were distinct Presbyteries erected ?

In 1810 the Church was divided into three Presbyteries, and in the following year (1811) these Presbyteries met in Synod.

278. Has not a new exhibition of her principles, brought down to the present time, and applied to recent occurrences, been adopted, and published ?

Yes, in 1840.

279. What is the present condition of the Reformed Presbyterian Church ?

It is one of peace and of moderate prosperity. She consists of six Presbyteries, has thirty-four ordained ministers, six licentiates, and an encouraging number of young men attending the Theological Hall and the different universities.*

280. In what enterprises for the extension of the Gospel is she engaged ?

*See note at end of p. 77.

Besides co-operating with others in common undertakings, she has a missionary among the Jews in London, one among the natives of New Zealand, and one in the New Hebrides.*

281. Whence may a correct acquaintance with the principles and position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church be obtained?

From the Westminster standards and her own Testimony. Enquirers may also consult, with profit, "Plain Reasons," "Bi-Centenary Commemoration of the Westminster Assembly," "Lectures on the Second Reformation," "Informatory Vindication," "Faithful Contendings," "Hind let Loose," "Explanation and Defence of the terms of Communion," "Claims of the Divine Government," &c.

282. Have her principles obtained a footing in other countries?

Yes: the Rev. Messrs. Marshall and Nairne were, soon after the constitution of the Presbytery in Scotland, sent to confirm the brethren in Ireland. The first minister, Mr. William Martin, was ordained at Vow, on the Lower Bann, in July, 1757. The next ordained was Mr. Matthew Lynn. A Presbytery was constituted in 1763. In 1810 the Presbytery agreed to resolve itself into four

* This statement refers to the state of the R.P. Church in Scotland before the division in 1863, when a large majority departed from the position of the Church as defined in her standards.

Presbyteries; and in 1811 the first meeting of Synod was held, at Cullybackey.

283. Have they not also extended to the American continent?

Yes: the Covenanting Banner was first unfurled there by Mr. Craighead. In 1752, Mr. Cuthbertson was sent thither by the Presbytery in Scotland. In 1774, a Presbytery was constituted. In 1809, several Presbyteries were united in one Synod.

284. Are there churches constituted on the same principles in any other parts of the world?

Yes: there is a Presbytery, founded by ministers from Ireland, in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia; a Presbytery, founded by ministers from America, in Northern India; several ministers are located in Canada; and there are several congregations in England.*

XII.—PRESENT POSITION OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN REGARD TO THE CIVIL INSTITUTIONS.

285. What is the position which members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church feel it their duty to maintain towards the civil institutions of the country, at the present time?

* The R.P. Church of America has no missionaries in India now; but it conducts mission work at Latakia, Mersine, and Suadea; in Cyprus and in China; besides there are missions to the Indians, the Chinese, and the freed men, in America. There is only one R.P. Congregation now in England.

They feel constrained, in fidelity to their principles, to abide in the position of dissent and separation maintained by their fathers for upwards of 160 years.

286. Have not very great changes been made in the government of these countries since the Revolution ?

Undoubtedly there have. The attainments of the Second Reformation, however, are still *legally* null and void ; in ordering and conducting the government, the authority of God's word is not recognized ; the supremacy of Christ over the nation is neither formally nor practically acknowledged ; the homage of the nation is tendered to the great idol of political expediency ; the headship of Christ over his church is invaded and conferred on a mortal ; the favour extended to the churches is vicious in principle, and has tended rather to corrupt them than to advance the interests of religion ; the education of the people has been neglected, or attempted on a principle that disregards the distinctions between truth and error ; and the profanation of the Lord's day has been permitted almost without restraint.—(Hist. Test. p. 211.)

287. Under what obligations are members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church placed in consequence of their dissent from the civil state, and their protest against it ?

They are bound to refrain from giving to it any pledge of their approbation or support ; to refrain from taking any part in working

out its legitimate results; faithfully to expose the evils embodied in the constitution or practised by the administration; and unceasingly to urge the claims of God and of his Christ.

288. What answer would you give to those who ask you, why you cannot vow allegiance to institutions which so many good men admire?

That they embody in them principles which are sinful; that they are largely antichristian; that they are built upon the overthrow of a more excellent system; that they are in subversion of national vows; and that all this is true amid the clearest light with which any nation has ever been favoured.—(Hist. Test. p. 221.)

289. Can any member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church become a member of the Legislature?

No.

290. Why?

Because, “to men possessing scriptural qualifications, the very terms of office in Britain have been such as to render power wholly inaccessible.”—(Hist Test. p. 171.)

291. What are those terms which you esteem such a formidable hindrance?

They must bind themselves “to maintain an immoral constitution, and to perpetuate those laws by the operation of which the church and true religion have suffered incalculable injury.”—(Hist. Test. p. 172.)

292. Can Reformed Presbyterians take the oaths to Government which are required of persons filling offices in Church and State ?

No ; “ There are no oaths to the Government in being but which exclude the Oath of the Covenant, and homologate the united constitution.”—(Hist. Test. p. 222, “ Answers by the Associate Presbytery.”)

293. But is it not commonly said that these Oaths mean nothing, that they are a mere form, and that men are understood, even after having sworn them, to be free to speak and act as they judge best ?

It is too true : but such sentiments are subversive of moral principle and social security, they are contrary to the express teachings of God’s word, and are directly condemned in the Confession of Faith to which the majority in Scotland have avowed their adherence.—(See Confess. chap xxii. 3.)

294. Can Reformed Presbyterians consistently sit in Parliament by their representatives, by using the elective franchise ?

No : they cannot “ commission others to do for them what it would be unwarrantable or immoral to do in their own persons.”—(Hist. Test. p. 222.)

295. Can they hold any office, civil or military, which would require them to aid in carrying into practice any part of an immoral code of laws ?

No.

296. Are they debarred from doing what is in their power, as private individuals, for strengthening those wholesome laws which are necessary for the security of life and property, and for promoting the administration of justice?

No: "when they are permitted to do so without being identified with a corrupt constitution."—(Doct. Test. pp. 100—101; Hist. Test. p. 222.)

297. Do their dissent and protest place them under any obligation to resist constituted authorities, or to rebel against them?

No: having by their dissent and protest freed themselves from all responsibility for constitutional evils, they are bound to no resistance but what is *moral*, and they will endeavour, by the performance of what is right, to promote the peace and good order of society.—(Doct. Test. p. 101.)

298. Is it consistent with this dissent to pay taxes?

Yes, "if not exacted for an expressly immoral purpose, nor required as a pledge of adherence to the established order of things."—(Doct. Test. p. 101.)

299. May Reformed Presbyterians pray for the civil rulers?

Most certainly; but they "cannot warrantably employ forms of prayer that would even seem to express approbation of institutions which they believe to be essentially defective and immoral."—(Hist. Test. p. 221)

300. Are those who dissent from the civil constitution, and protest against it, entitled to claim protection to their lives and property?

Unquestionably ; they may expect what is freely accorded to every stranger living peaceably, paying public burdens, and substantially promoting the ends of government, although not seeking nor enjoying the full rights of citizenship.

301. But is it possible to live on British soil, and to enjoy protection, without being incorporated with the national society, and being involved in the guilt attaching to its constitution and administration ?

It is. God places no man in circumstances where he is under the necessity of sinning, or of being a partaker in sin.

302. Should an attempt be made to compel men to do things inconsistent with their declared convictions and position, what is their duty ?

Any such attempt would be cruel and unjust ; but in such a case they must rather submit to privations and hardships, than forego or contradict their testimony.

303. Are Reformed Presbyterians, because of the position they have assumed, justly chargeable with being enemies to civil government ?

No : they are enemies only to its corruptions, which can work nothing but injury to rulers and subjects ; they fervently desire to stand clear of these corruptions ; and their

great aim is to bring government institutions into harmony with the law of Christ, so that nations under them may be abundantly blessed.

304. Is not their position at variance with the doctrines taught, Rom. xiii. 1—5, that the powers which be are ordained of God, and that every soul is to be subject to the higher power?

No; power there must denote *magistracy*, and not *individual magistrates*,—magistracy as fulfilling the functions assigned to it, not magistracy under every corrupt form which men may cause it to assume.

305. But was not Nero, one of the most infamous rulers, Emperor at Rome when the Apostle wrote, and were not Christians called to be subject to *his government* for conscience' sake?

Nero was indeed Emperor at that time, but could not be intended as the ordinance of God to which Christians were called to submit, inasmuch as what is there asserted of God's ordinance was most untrue of him. No man will presume to insert his name, and to read that passage as applicable to him. Let any one try.

306. If every existing government, irrespective of its character, be the moral ordinance of God, and entitled to conscientious submission, must not every revolution be rebellion against God?

Yes; on that assumption, the present

Sovereign has no right to the throne of Britain, the whole nation is chargeable with rebellion, and all hope of deliverance for oppressed communities is cut off.

307. Did not Joseph and Daniel hold office under heathen magistrates ?

They did ; but there was no constitutional compact, embodying iniquity, to which they were taken bound. No sinful engagement was required of them as the condition of office. They were left free to act *according to their own judgment of what was right*. Gen. xli. 40 ; Dan. vi. 3. They were subject to no interference but the individual will of the monarch, and when he required what was wrong, they refused compliance.

308. Is it any valid objection to the principles of Reformed Presbyterians, that they will not be fully received and acted on until the Millennium ?

None whatever. On the contrary, it is an express acknowledgment of their scriptural character, and of the obligation lying on God's people, constantly to abide by them.

309. Do they not, by standing aloof from civil institutions, hinder themselves from an opportunity of helping forward those changes which they contend to be needful ?

It is true ; but the blame of this rests with those who make power inaccessible, except on sinful conditions, and not on them. They may not do, nor acknowledge, nor promise, evil that good may come.

310. What are the best methods of arresting attention to their principles on this point, of impressing men with a sense of their importance, and of promoting their ultimate success ?

Abiding steadfastly by them, even when it may be a trial to feeling and a temporal inconvenience to do so. It will thus be seen that their minds are made up, and that they esteem them matters of importance. Men will be induced to examine into their merits, and more cheerfully to remove hindrances out of the way of those who adhere to them, than if they could accommodate themselves to every requirement without scruple.

XIII.—POSITION OF THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN REGARD TO THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

311. Has the position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church undergone any change in regard to the Established Church, since the Revolution ?

No ; various alterations have taken place, but the grand original grounds of objection remain, and, in some cases, the progress of events has only served to render them more manifest.

312. What reply would you give, were you asked why you cannot unite with the Established Church *now* ?

Because she still adheres to her union with an immoral and Erastian State ; because

her settlement *now*, as *formerly*, is subversive of the Second Reformation; because she holds her Confession of Faith by the prescription of the State, and without the qualifying Act of 1647; because her Presbyterianism rests on no higher ground than that it is agreeable to the inclination of the people; because the antichristian yoke of Patronage, bound upon her by the State, is still tamely submitted to; because qualifications, prescribed solely by civil authority, and entirely of a civil character, are accepted by her as indispensable to the exercise of the ministry, under pain of spiritual censures; and because her discipline, especially in regard to her membership, is exceedingly unfaithful.

313. Did not the Established Church attempt to make changes, the object of which was to remedy some of these evils?

She did. She enacted the *Veto law* and the *Chapel Act*.

314. What was the object of the Chapel Act?

To raise Chapel ministers to an equality with Parish ministers, by admitting them to church courts, allowing them the power of discipline in their own congregations, and empowering them to take part in the general government of the Church from which, by an unprincipled distinction, they had been excluded.—(Free Church Catechism, Quest. 281.)

315. What was the object of the Veto Law?

To prevent the intrusion of unacceptable ministers on congregations.

316. What was the fate of these measures ?

They were pronounced by the Civil Courts to be illegal, every thing done in prosecution of them was declared null and void, and members of Church Courts were held liable in damages who should presume to observe and apply them.

317. Was the Veto Law such as merited the approbation of Christians, or deserved to be the object of a struggle ?

It was not. In it first the Established Church gave a formal recognition to the law of Patronage ; in it she declined to seek for the people their right to choose their ministers, and gave them instead the invidious and ungracious power of rejecting a presentee towards whom they entertained positive dislike.

318. Did the Legislature, when appealed to, give any relief ?

No ; it was absolutely refused.

319. How did the Established Church act in these circumstances ?

A large party withdrew from their connection with the State. A larger number remained, accepted the law as interpreted by the Civil Courts, and proceeded to act in accordance with it, by treating all that had been done by the Church as null and void.

320. What is the present condition of the Established Church in relation to the State ?

The yoke of Patronage has been fully imposed, with the astringing clause of 1592 ; the State is declared to have the right and power to coerce the Church in the formation of the pastoral relation—to interdict the preaching of the Gospel, and the administration of solemn ordinances—to suspend spiritual censures—to set aside sentences in deposing ministers, and to restore them to their offices—to supersede the majority of Church Courts and to authorize the minority to exercise these functions—and to stay processes of discipline, when the law of Patronage, and the civil rights which it bestows, are in any part infringed. It is also law that no minister can be admitted to Church Courts, or to sit in any judicatory, without the sanction of a Civil Court.—(Free Church Protest.)

321. Was the constitution of the Revolution Church invaded or overturned by these decisions?

No : these decisions were only the vigorous and somewhat stern assertion and application of the principles in the exercise of which it was at first erected, and which were largely embodied in the settlement which it had quietly accepted.

322. Had this Church never any reason previously to complain of the State, as invading her spiritual rights?

Frequently, although she seldom if ever did complain. The State, however, never

had any cause *previously* to annul the Church's decisions, because she *never before* had presumed to do any thing in opposition to State enactments.

323. What, then, is your judgment of the Established Church, as it at present exists?

That, however sound her doctrinal standards, and notwithstanding the excellence of some of her ministers, she is the creature of the State, and in such a condition of bondage under the civil authority, as it is unfaithful in any church to endure.

XIV.—THE FREE CHURCH.

324. What became of the large party that protested against the decision of the Civil Courts and of the Legislature, and renounced their connection with the State?

They formed themselves into a distinct religious fellowship, under the name of THE FREE PROTESTING CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

325. Has not this Church asserted, in a very full and faithful manner, the exclusive headship of Christ over his Church, and her consequent right to freedom from civil control in all spiritual matters?

She has. In the resolutions of 1838, by an adherence to which the Disruption was accomplished, it is asserted, "That in all matters touching the doctrine, discipline, and government of *this* Church, her judicatories possess an exclusive jurisdiction, founded on the Word of God."

326. Have you any thing to object to this resolution ?

Yes : while it is a faithful assertion of what Christ has conferred on *his* church, and of what every church ought to hold fast, it is what the *Revolution Church never did possess*, as we have seen from the character of her settlement, the events of her history, and the judgment of those to whom the interpretation of civil statutes is exclusively committed.

327. You, then, regard the Free Church as constitutionally and historically wrong in asserting that the Revolution Church always possessed this exclusive jurisdiction ?

Yes.

328. Has not the Free Church in various ways expressed much respect for the principles and objects of the Second Reformation ?

She has ; and has frequently claimed to be the only legitimate representative of the Reformers of that period.

329. What have you to object to this claim ?

That she cleaves to connections which are at variance with the principles and vows of the Second Reformation, with the faithful assertion and exercise of the Church's independence, and with the sole headship of Jesus Christ therein.

330. What are those connections to which you refer ?

Her own words best explain this. They are these : “ This Church valuing highly, as

she ever has done, her connection, *on the terms contained in the statutes herein-before recited, with the State,*" &c. Her protest is against those things done by the civil magistrate "as contrary to, and subversive of, the settlement of the Church effected *at the Revolution*, and solemnly guaranteed by the Act of Security and *Treaty of Union*, and she reserves to herself the right to seek the restoration of what she affirms to have been thus subverted."—(See Claim of Right and Protest.)

331. Do not these bonds commit her irretrievably to the Revolution Settlement, to the treaty of Union, and to the desirableness of a union, *upon the terms contained in these*, with an immoral and antichristian State?

They do.

332. On what ground do you affirm that adherence to the Revolution Settlement is at variance with the Second Reformation, and with the Church's independence?

Because by resting that settlement upon the Act 1592, and allowing the Act Rescissory to remain in force, it treated the Second Reformation as a nullity, because it was introduced in the exercise of Erastian power, and because it retained for the magistrate an Erastian influence which he has not failed to exercise.

333. But does not the Free Church admit the defective and mischievous character of the Revolution Settlement?

She does. She confesses that in it there were serious defects and blemishes; that these were not found in the Reformation which it superseded; and that these were the means of impairing the Church's freedom. These admissions only render the cleaving to it the more inconsistent and inexcusable. —(Pastoral Address, 1843.)

334. What is your objection to the Treaty of Union upon which she rests her claim of right?

While that treaty guarantees the perpetuity of the Church of Scotland, *as established by law*, it takes Scotland bound to maintain Episcopacy, as established in England, *in-violate for ever*—an engagement alike opposed to Christ's headship and to the national vows.

335. Is the Free Church, properly speaking, an anti-patronage Church?

No: her grand struggle was for the maintenance of the Veto Law, which homologated Patronage, and was designed to meddle with it to "*the least possible extent*"—which secured for the people not the right of election, but the negative power of rejecting an unacceptable presentee. Moreover, she formally declared that she did not abandon her connection with the State because of Patronage. —(See Letter signed Robert Gordon, D.D., Moderator, 1842, and Reply to Sir James Graham's Letter.)

336. But did she not resolve that Patronage was a grievance, had been attended with

much injury to the “cause of true religion in this church and kingdom, was the main cause of the difficulties in which she was involved, and ought to be abolished?”

She did.—(See Free Church Cat. Quest. 198.)

337. What induced her to adopt this resolution?

Not a conviction that Patronage is inherently wrong, as a violation of the law of Christ, and an invasion of the rights of his people; but the discovery that it was “the great obstacle to a satisfactory settlement” in the confirmation of the Veto Law, and was in violation of the Treaty of Union.

338. What led to this discovery?

Not the scriptural pleadings of anti-patronage men, but “three years of fruitless negotiation with the government of the country.”

339. Did the Veto Law, as the Free Church affirms, “in effect revive the call as the title to the pastoral office?”—(Free Church Cat. Quest. 193.)

It did not. IT ABOLISHED THE CALL, and substituted the mere absence of formal, outspoken opposition in its place.

340. Does not the Free Church readily acknowledge the civil constitution, and, by her members, swear allegiance to it, and aid in its administration?

Yes.

341. What is the effect of this?

In this way she becomes committed to the acknowledgment and support of that supremacy over the church which is held to be a prerogative of the crown, and an active party in the enforcement of those very wrongs on the Scottish Church, which she had, in her own case, proclaimed it iniquitous to inflict and sinful to endure.

342. While you have such objections to urge against the Free Church, is there not much in her character and history to cause satisfaction ?

Certainly. Her assertion of excellent principles, the scriptural character of her preaching, her activity in reclaiming the practical heathen at home, her zeal in the cause of missions, and her frequent faithfulness in gainstanding particular evils when there was danger of their being adopted by the Government or of their prevailing in society, merit cordial approbation.

XV.—OTHER PRESBYTERIANS.

343. Wherein do other Communities of Presbyterian Dissenters (the Free Church included) differ from the Reformed Presbyterian Church in regard to their origin ?

They have all been formed of parties who left the Revolution Church, because of evils in her *administration* ; the Reformed Presbyterian Church consists of those who never acceded to the Revolution Church, because they judged her *constitution* to be unscriptural.

344. Did not the Fathers of the Secession admit that there were many serious defects in the Revolution Settlement, in the State as well as in the Church, and testify against them?

They did.—(Hist. Test. p. 237.)

345. Did they not also decline taking the Oaths prescribed by government as a test of loyalty?

They did. — (See Answers to Nairne's Reasons of Dissent.)

346. Did they not, moreover, avow their adherence to the Second Reformation, and acknowledge the continued obligations of the National vows?

Yes.

347. Wherein, then, did they differ from the Reformed Presbyterian Church?

In their views of civil government, and of the duty of Christians to existing civil institutions.

348. What was their doctrine in regard to civil government?

That whatever magistrates are, in the providence of God, and by the consent of the majority of the inhabitants of a land, in the possession of the supreme civil power, are entitled to the allegiance of the whole community.—(Hist. Test. p. 238.)

349. Did they not admit that it would be advantageous, were the constitution of the civil government and the character of the rulers in accordance with the Divine law?

Yes ; “but in testing the claims of a government to allegiance, they would allow no question to be raised in regard to its *moral character*, in heathen or in Christian lands.”

350. What course did these principles lead them to adopt towards the government of these nations ?

“ They believed it incumbent on them to recognize it as the ordinance of God, and to yield it the benefit of their prayers and of their *active support*.”—(Hist. Test. p. 237.)

351. Can you reconcile this belief and practice with their refusal of the oaths of allegiance, as excluding the oath of the covenants, and homologating the united constitution ?

I cannot. I believe them to be irreconcilable.

352. If their principles be sound, could the parties by whom the Revolution was accomplished, or the Revolution itself, be justified ?

No ; neither could any revolution at any time, however much needed, be undertaken or accomplished.

353. Can such principles be reconciled with a faithful adherence to Christ’s headship over the nations, and over his church ?

They cannot : they constrain to recognize as God’s ordinance, and actively to support, institutions which are framed in violation of his law, which vest the supremacy over the

church that rightly belongs to him in civil princes, and which, we are assured, he will subvert.

354. Can they be reconciled with a faithful adherence to the national vows ?

No ; in these vows the promise of allegiance and support to civil institutions and rulers is limited, and is given *on condition* of their being employed in defence and support of the true religion, and of the civil liberties of the kingdom.

355. Is it possible that those governments can be the MORAL ordinance of God, and entitled to our *active support*, which are to be broken in pieces and destroyed by that kingdom which shall stand for ever ?

No ; God's moral ordinance cannot be hostile to the claims of God's Son, neither can it be the object of God's threatening and vengeance. Actively supporting sinful institutions is inconsistent with prayer and effort for the final triumph of Christ's kingdom.

356. Does the United Presbyterian Church adhere to the ground originally assumed by the Secession ?

No ; doctrines have been propounded and hailed with general favour in that Church, which tend to bring the whole Scottish Reformation, *in so far as it was a national work*, into discredit.—(Hist. Test. p. 239).

357. What are the doctrines to which you refer ?

That national establishments of religion, and even national countenance to religion, are, in every case, unlawful.

358. What are the general principles on which these doctrines are based ?

That even in lands possessing the Scriptures, civil rulers, *as such*, have nothing to do with religion, and that nations *in their public capacity* can do no homage to Christ, nor make any exertion in his cause.—(Hist. Test. p. 245.)

359. What are some of the conclusions to which these principles necessarily lead ?

That in their public corporate capacity nations *owe* no allegiance to the Most High ; that in constructing their civil constitutions they are under no obligations to regard his revealed will, or to render those constitutions subservient to the interests of religion ; and that in the choice of persons to whom political power is to be entrusted, no man should be held ineligible either on account of the falsehood of his religious tenets, or his known hostility to religion.—(Hist. Test. p. 245.)

360. By what name would such a state of things, if it could possibly exist, be appropriately called ?

“ A system of *national* atheism and infidelity.”

361. Would not such a system rob Messiah of the honour of his supremacy over the nations ?

It would. Supposing it to prevail, “ we

cannot perceive how it is possible that the Divine promise could ever be fulfilled, that the *kingdoms* of this world shall become the *kingdoms* of our God and of his Christ."

362. On what grounds do you affirm these principles to be subversive of the Second Reformation?

Because they constrain to disown the lawfulness and obligation of the national covenants, and make national covenanting unwarrantable under the Christian dispensation; they also prohibit a nation from consecrating any portion of its substance, or employing its influence, for religious purposes, under any circumstances.—(Hist. Test. p. 248.)

363. Is not the ascendancy of such principles calculated to exert a mischievous influence on the interests of religion and morality?

It is. It would exemplify and commend on a great scale religious indifference and neutrality. It would cause the protection of the Sabbath to be abandoned. In many instances the vilest men would be exalted, and, as the result, wicked men would walk on every side.

364. But did not the gospel make triumphant progress when it received no countenance from nations and their rulers?

It is true; but it also prospered when persecuted by the nations and their rulers, and on this ground we may plead that it is

their duty to persecute religion, as well as maintain that they should be indifferent about it.

365. Is it not a dishonour done to religion to represent it as requiring civil countenance and national favour ?

We do not represent these as necessary to its existence, or even to its prosperity ; but we plead that it is the *duty* of nations and their rulers to render them, and that doing so is *indispensable* to their continued existence and prosperity. Isa. lx. 12.

366. But does not the presently divided condition of the nation in regard to religion render national aid and countenance to religion inexpedient and improper ?

That is quite another question. What is inexpedient in a disordered state of society should not be made the rule for communities in a well regulated condition. The difficulty of applying a principle under certain circumstances, does not prove that principle to be wrong, and that it ought forthwith to be abandoned.

367. What are the views held by the Reformed Presbyterian Church in regard to an alliance between Church and State ?

She holds that in order to such an alliance being lawful or beneficial, it is necessary that not only the *terms* of the alliance be scriptural, but that the *parties* entering into the alliance be possessed of a scriptural character.—(See

“Messiah the Prince,” by the Rev. William Symington, D.D.)

368. Is it, then, safe and dutiful in any church to enter into or abide by an alliance with the British Government?

No: it wants those qualifications without which a union between Church and State can neither be lawful nor beneficial.”—(Hist. Test. p. 171.)

369. Has the Reformed Presbyterian Church given any practical proof of her sincerity in holding these views?

Her ministers in Ireland have invariably declined to apply for or accept the Regium Donum, freely dispensed to all dissenters.

370. Is it safe or lawful for any *State* to enter into alliance with the Romish Church?

It is not: it is the sin of spiritual fornication, and is denounced in Scripture as exposing to divine wrath.

371. Do the principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church place her under any necessity to become the apologist of any national establishment of religion which at present exists?

By no means. She frankly acknowledges such establishments to be wrongly founded, and to be an abuse of an excellent principle.

372. Can you refer to any instance in which an approach was made to the embodiment of Scriptural principles in the civil and religious institutions of a nation?

During the Second Reformation an attempt was made, and was largely successful, to bring the institutions of this country into harmony with the word of God, to place them in dutiful alliance and co-operation, and to commit the administration of them to persons possessed of scriptural qualifications.

373. Does the Reformed Presbyterian Church esteem it indispensable to an alliance between Church and State, that the ministers of religion be paid by the government?

No. "The question of the external support or endowment of the Church is to be looked upon as a *subsidiary arrangement*, desirable when it can be obtained, but the *expediency* of which must depend upon the circumstances of a church and nation."—(Rev. A. Symington, D.D., Lectures on the Second Reformation.)

XVI.—ORIGINAL SECESSION.

374. Is there not a party which abides steadfastly by Original Secession principles?

Yes; the Original Secession Church.

375. Does not that Church, in her testimony, assert the universal headship of Jesus Christ?

She does; she declares "that magistracy, like everything belonging to the kingdom of providence, is put into Christ's hand, to be ordered in subserviency to the good of his church."—(Testimony.)

376. Does she also faithfully assert the

duty of nations and their rulers to the Redeemer ?

Yes ; she maintains “ that it is the duty of nations and their rulers to regulate the whole of their conduct by the will of God.”—(Test.)

377. To what do you object in their declared sentiments as inconsistent with these great principles ?

We decidedly object to the positions that, in lands enjoying the clear light of revelation, “ the public good of outward and common order to the glory of God ” is *the only end* which the magistrate can propose to himself in the exercise of his office ; that “ the whole institution and end of that office are cut out by, and lie within, the compass of *natural principles* ; ” that the body politic or majority of a nation have a right to erect immoral and unscriptural institutions ; and that a minority disapproving is bound to yield allegiance to these institutions when set up.

378. Did not the Secession Church depose the Rev. Thomas Nairne for embracing and avowing the principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church ?

Yes ; and in answers to his reasons of dissent, the principles of that church are formally repudiated and condemned.

379. Is the Original Secession Church, *as such*, still committed to this formal condemnation of these principles ?

She is ; her terms of communion bind her members to the recognition of the answers

to Mr. Nairne's reasons of dissent, in which the principles of the Reformed Presbyterian Church are repudiated, and the deposition of Mr. Nairne for embracing them is justified.

380. Is it not highly desirable that parties, so largely agreed in their views of truth and duty, and so cordial in their attachment to the attainments of former times as these two churches are, should come to full agreement and union?

Certainly it is; the removal of this reference to Mr. Nairne's case from the Original Secession Church's terms of communion, and a candid mutual explanation, might do much to accomplish such a result.

381. Do our separation from other churches, and our testimony against them in some important particulars, place us in a position of universal antagonism to these churches?

They do not. We are opposed in our views and practices on the points specified, but there are very many points on which, we are thankful to say, that we are fully agreed with them, and in maintaining which we cordially wish them success.

382. Is it not unkind and uncalled for to bring the deficiencies and errors of other churches so prominently into view, and so unsparingly to condemn them, when there are so many particulars in which they display fidelity?

Very far from it; it is true kindness to these churches themselves. It is warranted

and exemplified by the Saviour in his epistles to the seven churches. It is required by fidelity to him, and by an enlightened desire, through a full manifestation of the truth, to benefit in the highest degree our fellow-men.

383. Is this state of ecclesiastical separation from other churches holding largely by the truth, and this decidedly-expressed difference in sentiment and practice in some important particulars, inconsistent with Christian regard, and a cordial co-operation so far as there is agreement?

It is not; and it is just cause for regret that an opposite judgment prevails, and that those who honestly differ are so often regarded as enemies.

SUMMARY.

384. Can you say in a word what the one great doctrine for which the Reformed Presbyterian Church, in her testimony, and by the peculiar position which she feels called upon to maintain, is endeavouring to witness?

THE UNIVERSAL HEADSHIP OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

385. What do you mean by the Universal Headship of Christ?

That supremacy to which he has been exalted as a reward for his humiliation and sufferings, and for empowering him to carry on his mediatorial undertaking until it is triumphantly completed, in the salvation of his people and the subjugation of his

enemies. Isa. liii. 11, 12 ; John xvii. 1, 2 ; Ephes. i. 20—23 ; Phil. ii. 5—11.

386. Is Christ the head of the church ?

He is, to the exclusion of every other, whether pope or civil prince. Col. i. 18 ; Matt. xvi. 18, 19 ; John xiii. 13.

387. Is Christ, as Mediator, head of civil communities ?

Yes. Dan. vii. 13, 14 ; Ps. ii. 8, 9 ; lxxii. 7—11.

388. Is Christ head over civil princes and governors ?

Undeniably he is : he is affirmed to be “ King of kings and Lord of lords.” He is “ Prince of the kings of the earth,” and kings are called to “ kiss the Son, lest he be angry.”

389. Does the headship of Christ extend to every man in particular ?

It does. “ I would have you to know that the head of every man is Christ.” 1 Cor. xi. 3 ; Ephes. vi. 9.

390. In what sense is Christ the head of the church ?

It appertains to him alone, as head, “ to prescribe the doctrines of her faith, the institutions of her worship, and the principles of her fellowship, order, government, and discipline.”—(Doct. Test. xi. 9.)

391. What is the duty of the church towards Christ as her alone head ?

It is her duty to acknowledge and assert his alone headship ; to receive his instructions ; to obey his precepts ; to seek from

him that divine influence by which all means are rendered savingly effectual ; and to resist any attempt that may be made to invade his headship, to interfere with her liberty in rendering him obedience, or to infringe the liberties of his people.

392. What is the duty of nations towards Christ as their head ?

It is their duty to acknowledge his mediatorial authority, and submit to his sceptre, framing their laws, appointing their rulers, and rendering their obedience in agreeableness to the moral principles of the Gospel, and in subserviency to the interests of the kingdom of Christ.—(Doct. Test. xiii. 8.)

393. When you say that Christ is head of civil rulers, do you mean to assert that civil government is founded in grace ?

No ; the Reformed Presbyterian Church expressly condemns as an error the position “that magistracy is founded in grace,” and teaches that it is “a moral ordinance of God for the divine glory, and individual and social good.”

394. What then do you intend by the assertion that Christ is head of civil rulers ?

That civil rulers and governments are placed under the authority and at the disposal of Christ, *as Mediator*, for gracious and mediatorial purposes.

395. What is the duty of civil rulers to Christ as their head and king ?

It is their duty to own his authority ; to acquaint themselves with his will ; personally to profess and exemplify Christianity ; and *officially* to give their power and strength to the Prince of the kings of the earth. It is their duty to see that the open violations of his law, in both its tables, be restrained ; to remove external impediments to the progress of Christianity ; to protect the church in the enjoyment of her liberties, and to make regulations for her external support and welfare.—(Doct. Test. xiii. 9.)

396. What is the duty of individuals to Christ as their head ?

It is their duty to believe on his name ; to learn his will ; to walk in all his commandments and ordinances blamelessly ; to make an open profession of religion ; and to take a cordial interest in his church and cause among men.

397. What is the duty of Christ's followers towards the church of which he is the head ?

It is their duty to unite in her fellowship, and to aid in her enterprises, by prayer, by personal activity, and by a liberal contribution of their worldly substance.

398. Should any church become corrupt and unfaithful, or enter into corrupt and debasing alliances, what course should they pursue towards her ?

They ought to withdraw from her communion ; to cease from aiding her efforts

to condemn and expose her errors ; and to seek the fellowship of a church that is pure.

399. What is their duty towards civil governments, when constituted and administered on scriptural principles ?

They are called to honour, pray for, and support them, as *God's ordinance*.

400. Should the civil institutions become unscriptural or anti-scriptural in their character, administration, and influence, what course must they pursue towards them ?

Duty requires them carefully to refrain from any expression or act that would involve an approbation of them ; to decline entering into any compact, oath, or pledge, for their support and establishment ; to stand aloof from helping to work or administer them ; emphatically to protest against the dishonour done by them to the Redeemer ; and peaceably, yet energetically, to seek by all lawful means, those changes by which they may be brought into harmony with the will of the Redeemer.

401. But is not every existing government the moral ordinance of God, and, as such, entitled to recognition, honour, and support from all Christians, whatever its character may be ?

No : nothing can be the moral ordinance of God which wants the moral character which he affirms to belong to his ordinance, which is in direct opposition to it, which does not submit to be regulated by his will,

which invades his honour, corrupts and enslaves his church, or deprives men of their liberty to serve him.

402. Is not the case altered when the majority of a nation has agreed in establishing the existing institutions, and regards them with approbation ?

No : the nature of a thing is not changed, nor is the duty of Christians towards it in the least degree affected, whether it be regarded with favour by many or few. It is for the Lord's sake that they are called to submit to the ordinances of men, and when they cannot do it for his sake, as honouring to him, it ought not to be done at all.

403. Will not an enlightened regard to Christ's universal headship, and the faithful advocacy of what is due to him from the church, the nations, their rulers, and individual men, sufficiently explain and justify the doctrines and actings of the Reformed Presbyterian Church ?

They will.

404. How will they account for and justify her unwavering attachment to the Second Reformation ?

“ Because it did honour to *the King of Zion*, by pleading for the liberty and independence of his church, and asserting his sole headship over her ; and it did honour to *the King of nations* by requiring of the kingdom to frame its constitution, to appoint its rulers, to enact its laws, and conduct its adminis-

tration, not in hostility to his kingdom, but in subserviency to it."—"Christ's Headship over the Nations," by the Rev. Andrew Symington, D.D.)

405. Do they require and justify her adherence to the national vows, and her advocacy of their continued obligation on these kingdoms?

They do: these vows were solemn public acknowledgments by the nation of Christ's universal headship, they were an avowal of national submission to him, and embodied a pledge of devoted fidelity to his cause and truth, from which it is iniquitous and disloyal to the Redeemer to fall away through indifference, or to depart through aversion.

406. In what light do they exhibit the Protest of the Covenanters in 1650, against the repealing of the Act of Classes?

As a required act of fidelity to the king of nations, when the majority were proceeding to break down scriptural institutions, and opening wide the gate for the admission of their enemies to power.

407. Was an acceptance of the Royal indulgences consistent with the honour due to Christ as head?

It was not, inasmuch as these indulgences proceeded on the assumption that the commission which ministers have received from Christ, through the rulers of his house, was insufficient without the authority of the civil prince, and that the civil magistrate is the

fountain of all spiritual authority ; and inas-
much as they fettered ministers in their
ministerial work by sinful restrictions.

408. Would an enlightened regard to
Christ's universal headship have permitted
the Covenanters to swear the oaths of al-
legiance to Charles I., and Charles II. ?

No : in their oaths of fealty to Christ, the
nations had limited their fealty to princes by
the condition, that their authority should be
employed in support and defence of the true
religion and the liberties of the kingdom ;
whereas the oath of allegiance was required
to princes labouring for the subversion of
both, was a renunciation of their vow to
Christ, and acknowledged powers to be
vested in the civil prince which belong ex-
clusively to the Redeemer.

409. Does a due regard to the honour of
Christ's headship make it necessary still to
maintain a state of separation and dissent
from the civil constitution of these kingdoms,
and to refrain from swearing allegiance
to it ?

Yes : it is constructed upon the ruins of a
previous state of things in which his head-
ship was owned and respected, and in violation
of the nation's oath of allegiance to him. It
bestows his high prerogatives upon the civil
magistrate. It oppresses and enslaves the
church. It, moreover, systematically and
openly shows favour to Antichrist.

410. What judgment do the assertion and

application of Christ's headship call us to pronounce on the Romish Church?

That she is the Antichrist; and that the pope, her recognized head, is the Man of Sin, exalting himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; claiming supremacy over the church and the nations; enjoining ordinances that are not of the Redeemer's appointment; annulling what he has commanded, and keeping back his law from the people to whom it is addressed and for whom it is intended.

411. How does the Prelatical Church appear when viewed in the light of the Redeemer's headship?

Unfaithful to the Saviour. However sound many of her doctrines are, her Lordly hierarchy is in direct violation of his ordinance. She accepts the reigning monarch as her head instead of him—is regulated by Royal enactments—has much in her liturgy that is Popish—retains in her communion many who avow Romanist doctrines and tendencies—and abides in intimate alliance with a civil constitution that is unsound, and in many points antichristian.

412. Is not the Scottish Established Church deeply in fault in regard to the Redeemer's headship?

She is. Her Confession of Faith and her Presbyterian order are prescribed solely by civil authority—She consents to wear the yoke of Patronage, which enslaves her minis

ters and robs her people—She engages in the spiritual duties of fasting, thanksgiving, and prayer at the dictation of the civil magistrate—She cleaves to the civil State, although such that the union of the Church with it can neither be lawful nor beneficial—She gives her active support to the civil constitution, notwithstanding the many serious evils that are declared to be integral parts of it—and she habitually violates the Divine ordinance of discipline, by making almost no attempt to discriminate between the precious and the vile in admission to her fellowship.

413. Has the universal headship of Christ been duly acknowledged and honoured by the Free Church of Scotland?

No. While we most gladly confess that many things have been pleaded and done well by her on its behalf, fidelity constrains us to affirm that she fails and errs in many important particulars. She cleaves to the Revolution (indeed claims to be the Revolution Church), in which the honour of Christ's headship and the liberties of his people were seriously compromised; she rests on the Act 1592, and thus *virtually* treats all done in honour of Christ's headship during the Second Reformation as having no existence; she pleads the Act of Union, in which, as a return for the guarantee of her stability, the Revolution Church united in an engagement to perpetuate the establishment of Prelacy; she has not taken the high ground of condemning

Patronage as unscriptural and antichristian, or of recognizing it as the right of the Christian people conferred on them by the Redeemer, to *elect* their own ministers ; and, notwithstanding her separation, AS A CHURCH, from the State, because of evils inflicted by it which were pronounced to be sinful and intolerable, her members *individually* swear allegiance to, actively support, and take part in administering, that State by which these evils were perpetrated, by which they are still inflicted upon the Established Church, and in which flagrant invasions of Christ's prerogatives are directly embodied.

414. Will those dissenting communities, by which the voluntary principle is adopted, abide the trial when the claims of Christ's headship are brought to bear upon them ?

No.

415. How does this appear ?

The voluntary principle which they hold, teaches that kings and nations, *as such*, have nothing to do with the law and religion of Jesus. It thus sets them loose from all obligation to him, and denies his supremacy *as mediator* over them. If acted on, the cry never could be heard, "The *kingdoms* of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ," nor would such an announcement be esteemed desirable.

416. Are their actings in harmony with their teachings on this point ?

They are not. While thus denouncing all connection between Church and State, and all *national* countenance given to religion, as absolutely unlawful, their members swear allegiance to, support, and take part in administering, a constitution in which such connections, *in a very corrupt form*, are fully embraced—institutions by which the prerogatives of Christ are directly invaded, and the liberties and independence of the Church are infringed.

417. What view does fidelity to Christ's headship require us to take of the fearfully relaxed state of discipline, which so extensively prevails among the churches?

We must pronounce it a gross prostitution of Christ's ordinance, a violation of his express commandment, a public dishonour done to his name, a formidable hindrance to the extension of his kingdom, and a cruel deceit practised upon deluded men.

418. What judgment must be pronounced upon those members of churches who live in the neglect of commanded duties, or indulge habitually in known sins?

However faithfully in words they may acknowledge and assert Christ's headship, they are practically renouncing it and treating it with dishonour, and their public professions are demonstrated to be insincere.

419. Can a watchful, zealous, uncompromising advocacy of Christ's headship

possibly have an unfavourable influence upon personal godliness ?

The very reverse must be the result. Honouring Christ is an important part of personal godliness, and the same motives which prompt to honour him in the vindication of his headship, will induce to honour him by a ready obedience to his will.

420. Is there anything more fitted than fidelity on this point to secure the prosperity of individuals and churches ?

Nothing. It may hinder the worldly advantage of individuals, and the outward prosperity of churches, in evil times ; but it will render them honourable in God's sight, will ensure their spiritual advancement, and they shall be honoured in connection with the ultimate triumphs of Christ's kingdom. The maxim of his administration is, "Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

421. What, then, are the duty and the interest of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, and of all her individual members ?

To abide steadfast by the claims of Christ ; to keep his headship prominently in the view of society ; unceasingly to urge its requirements ; to test all things, civil and religious, by the application of it to their character and tendencies ; and to choose or refuse, according as he is honoured or disregarded, in all matters of doctrine, institution, and practice.